

Southeast Asia AL1

[For a general discussion of the effect of the policies of the colonial government on the education system, and on divers aspects of the native society, see table of contents for pertinent sections in 8: Furnivall, AL1 Southeast Asia, category 116.]

12 PIONEER SETTLEMENT IN THE ASIATIC TROPICS

0 00 fits perfectly, for it does not require a permanent field but can be grown anywhere, on flat land or steep slopes, provided that the rainfall is sufficiently heavy and the temperature and soil are suitable. In contrast, the cultivation of wet rice requires a sophisticated technique. To adapt to agriculture in Southeastern Asia Owen Lattimore's remark on the place of irrigation in Chinese agriculture,²⁴ we may say that the cultivation of wet rice lies at the core of agriculture in Southeastern Asia but not at the very roots.²⁵

243 The sedentary cultivators of Southeastern Asia have developed not only a notable range of varieties of wet rice adapted to varying natural conditions but also many differing techniques of rice culture, which embody the experience of generations of cultivators. Every important phase of the cultivation of wet rice has many variants. The reasons for these are often hidden to the casual observer, but Western agricultural specialists after painstaking research and experimentation have been forced to concede their value.

The ordinary varieties of wet rice differ greatly in respect to the time required for maturing and the amount of water needed. Selection has led to such remarkable achievements as the development of floating rice and of salt-loving varieties. The floating rice of Thailand and Cochinchina can be grown on land subject to prolonged high floods, a condition that ordinary varieties of wet rice do not tolerate. The growing plants are able to keep up with the rising floodwater; in extreme cases, the stems may reach a length of as much as 12 or 15 feet.²⁶ Salt-loving rices, which can be grown on saline soils or in brackish water, are cultivated along coasts or estuaries.

The raising of seedlings in seedbeds, after which they are transplanted to the field, is the main characteristic of most Oriental wet-rice culture. This practice has given Oriental rice relatively high yields. The preparation of the seedbed itself varies considerably.²⁷ The commonest method of raising rice seedlings is to make the seedbed on thoroughly soaked and puddled ground. Frequently the seed is soaked and allowed to germinate before it is sown in the bed. In the northern Philippines the seedlings are raised in seedbeds that are not flooded and puddled but are left dry. When the seedlings are pulled up from either a wet or a dry seedbed their roots

²⁴ Lattimore: *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 1940, p. 312. Elsewhere (p. 29) he says, "To assume the working out of such a technique [irrigated rice-growing] at the earliest stages of cultural and social development implies the ability to take a second major step forward at a time when the first tentative step had barely become possible."

[243] ²⁵ In Java, for example, the cultivation of wet rice has spread only relatively recently into Sundanese territory and did not reach northern Bantam until the sixteenth century. Even today the Badoei of West Java have religious scruples against the planting of wet rice as well as against the use of the hoe or of the plow and carabao. Notwithstanding strenuous efforts on the part of the government to induce the Badoei to adopt a more intensive form of agriculture they continue to practice shifting cultivation and in the main to plant upland rice, using the dibble stick. See Kool's: *Hoema's*, 1935, pp. 22-23.

²⁶ Tran-van-Huu: "Note sur la culture du riz flottant en Cochinchine," 1920, pp. 46-54.

²⁷ Copeland: *op. cit.*, pp. 226-229.

THE SEDENTARY CULTIVATOR

49

Irrigation systems also fall into two categories: peasant irrigation works and technical irrigation works. The former have existed throughout Southeastern Asia for more than a thousand years. In recent times scientifically trained engineers have designed large-scale systems with concrete weirs and locks. Fields solely dependent upon impounded rain water produce one rice crop a year, whereas irrigated fields often yield two crops. If even with irrigation only one crop can be produced, yet the irrigation system assures proper water control, whereas without it irregularities in the course of the rainy season may damage, or destroy, the crop.

Wet fields are protected against erosion by leveling, terracing, and dyking. But how does continued cropping affect the fertility of wet-rice fields? Diverse environments and cultural practices in Southeastern Asia create considerable differences in this respect. Much of the paddy land of the Philippines, Indochina, Thailand, Malaya, and Burma has lost a good deal of its original fertility because the peasants have not used manures, fertilizers, or crop rotation. In many instances, however, soil fertility has been preserved by the mineral matter dissolved in the irrigation water and by the silt deposited on those fields that are supplied with irrigation water coming from streams. The value of the water and silt depends, of course, upon the nature of the parent material from which it is derived. Rivers from a young volcanic region supply much richer water and silt than do those that drain a mountain region consisting of sedimentary rock or granite. For this reason, the Irrigation Service of the Netherlands Indies before making final plans for a new irrigation system takes samples of water and silt carried by rivers at different times of the year. The samples are analyzed in order to determine their influence upon the soil to be irrigated. A river found to be carrying water and silt that would lower the value of paddy land would be eliminated as a source of irrigation water, or its use would be limited as much as possible.

Irrigated fields of which the water supply does not contain minerals in quantities necessary for continuous satisfactory plant growth and paddy land that depends exclusively upon rain, both require other techniques for maintaining fertility. In many regions cultivators cut the rice stems just far enough below the ear to allow bundling. This practice makes possible the return of the rest of the plant matter to the soil. From this it is only one more step to work household refuse into the ground together with ashes of burned rubbish, rice husks, leaves, and manure.

As stable manure is not available in adequate quantities, intensive studies of the application of green manures to the cultivation of rice have been made in a number of countries of Southeastern Asia. A recent article by W. Bally reviews the results of these studies.¹⁴ In a few rice-growing regions the peasants, on their own initiative, have learned to use legumes to improve rice soil. In wet fields the decomposition of green manure takes place under anaerobic conditions, and the final product is ammonia. Since

¹⁴ Bally: "The Employment of Green Manures," 1936, pp. T10-T31.

243
312
[177]

243
134
312

[654]

243
134
242

52 PIONEER SETTLEMENT IN THE ASIATIC TROPICS

SEA
312
243

mand respect and admiration for the ingenuity displayed.²⁰ "The serious imperfections which characterize native irrigation works and make rice culture uncertain, particularly in the plains, can assuredly not be charged to the account of these who constructed them."²¹ The weirs, by means of which the peasants raise the water of small rivers, are especially weak. The construction material consists of bamboo, trunks of coconut and other trees, and boulders. At times great bamboo baskets are filled with heavy stones and placed in the river, or large stones are laid loosely across the channel. Where the rivers are wide the people drive two rows of tree trunks into the river bed and fill the space between the rows with whatever debris they have at hand. These weirs frequently break because of river floods as they have no provision for allowing passage of flood waters; yet repair is often impossible for the duration of the rainy season, so that the crop is ruined. Another constructional disadvantage is the open intakes. During floods large quantities of water flow through these and cause an excessive soaking of the fields and damage to the canals. Wherever a canal has to cross a depression, a road, or another watercourse, bamboo or hollowed tree trunks are used to carry the water overhead. This often leads to large losses of water, especially during floods. Poor drainage is another weakness of peasant irrigation systems.

SEA
[177]

Scientifically trained engineers have come to the aid of peasant communities in Southeastern Asia and have designed irrigation systems based on technological principles and free from the weaknesses of peasant irrigation works. One of these technical irrigation systems may take care of tens of thousands of hectares of riceland belonging to hundreds of villages. In many instances the engineers have improved existing peasant irrigation works; more often they have made irrigation possible where peasant communities did not have the financial and technical resources to overcome natural obstacles. Technical irrigation works are usually government-financed.

SEA
[652]
P

312
243

In the Philippines most of the wet-rice fields are dependent exclusively upon the rain that falls directly on them. One centimeter of rain a day is said to be necessary for a healthy rice growth. But there is always the possibility that, particularly in the months of May and June, there may be so little rain that the peasants cannot prepare their fields. A shortage of rain in October is also dangerous as it may seriously damage, or even destroy, the crop, even though the precipitation during the rainy season may have been enough for the production of a satisfactory crop. To guard against an insufficiency of water for the wet-rice crop, therefore, the fields should be supplied by irrigation systems. The Philippines, however, do

P
[616]

²⁰ The *subaks* of Bali are agricultural cooperative societies that have been formed to construct, maintain, and administer irrigation systems. The achievements of the Balinese *subaks* are very remarkable in a number of ways. Thus, the men of certain villages are especially skillful builders of irrigation works and are able to construct long canals and even tunnels of considerable length. These men are hired by the *subaks* and help them to solve their irrigation problems.

²¹ Van der Meulen: "Irrigation in the Netherlands Indies," 1940, p. 146.

THE SEDENTARY CULTIVATOR

77

land. An example is *mongo* (*Phaseolus mungo* L.), grown in Pangasinan and Batangas. Alarmed by the poor rice crops in 1940 and the difficulty of importing rice from Indochina and Thailand, the Philippine Bureau of Plant Industry, early in 1941, started to distribute seed of quick-growing dry-field crops, especially maize and legumes, in order to supplement the nation's rice bowl. But the average Filipino farmer is reluctant to accept this new practice, because "it is not the custom"—a powerful argument not to be easily overcome.

Dry-Field Crops Cultivated by Plantations

The discussion thus far has been limited to the native cultivation of dry land and to annual crops. However, extensive areas of non-irrigated land are occupied by perennial crops that are grown on plantations owned by Westerners. The crops produced include tea, coffee, cacao, quinine, rubber, palm oil, coconuts, kapok, sisal, and other fibre plants. Some of these crops were cultivated for a long time without the proper measures being taken to protect the soil against accelerated erosion. Although the detrimental effects of plantation agriculture in Ceylon and southern India are notorious in the plantation history of southern Asia, results were just as disastrous in Malaya and in the Netherlands Indies. Westerners, accustomed to clean cultivation or clean weeding in the temperate zone, carried this practice over into the tropics, with the result that soil erosion was very severe on steep slopes and led to great losses in soil fertility. Today, however, these mistakes have been recognized; there is hardly a plantation that has not adopted measures to protect sloping land against erosion and level land against soil exhaustion. The planters of Java were the pioneers in this field, introducing or developing most of the protective measures. These measures include contour drains, silt pits, contour ridges, terraces, hedges, shade trees, and especially cover crops. The use of these measures varies according to the crop, or crops, produced and according to climate, soil, and slope; but the purpose of all of them is to encourage an effective ground cover and to check the rate of water run-off. The financial depression of the 1930's—resulting in the need for very strict economy and a decrease in production costs—has helped considerably to reduce the amount of clean weeding and to convince conservative planters of the value of preserving a ground cover, litter, and mulch. Such measures help not only to retard erosion but also to enrich the soil. The first Western planter who broke away from the custom of keeping the ground of his plantation free from weeds was L. M. Tyl, who in the years 1890-96 developed the "weed-system" and thus introduced the idea of a ground cover into plantation circles of Southeastern Asia. But it took many years before his idea was generally accepted. It is interesting to note here that the Asiatic-owned plantations and the small holdings producing perennial crops, such as rubber, usually did not practice clean weeding. This, in the early days, was regarded by European observers as a sign of laziness and

[249]
[654]
241241
177
185
242

241
177
185
242
poor management, but, as has been so often the case, the Westerners were finally forced to admit the soundness of Oriental cultivation practices.

As we have seen, there are two principal means of protecting the soil between tree crops: by allowing the growth of indigenous plants or weeds (in other words the development of a natural mixed cover), or by establishing a pure cover of leguminous plants, many of which came originally from the New World. Rubber planters in Malaya seem to have had more success with the first method, which has been called "the forestry method of cultivation" or "rubber forestry."⁶⁷ Of course, the growth of indigenous plants or weeds must be controlled, and this is done by slashing the undergrowth from time to time. Frequently it is necessary to practice selective weeding in order to suppress undesirable plants and encourage more valuable ones.

654
249
Much research has been directed toward the study of leguminous cover crops which supply nitrogen, as well as foliage for green manure. This research was started in 1910 in the Botanical Garden at Buitenzorg. Some of the cover crops that have proved especially valuable and are widely used on modern plantations are *Calopogonium mucunoides* Desv., *Centrosema pubescens* Benth., *Centrosema plumierii* Benth., *Desmodium* species, *Tephrosia candida* DC. and *Tephrosia vogelii* Hook., *Mimosa invisa* Mart., *Cassia* species, and *Vigna oligosperma* Backer.⁶⁸ Several of these have already been mentioned in the foregoing discussion on the use of green manure crops in native agriculture.

Because a number of perennials such as tea, coffee, and cacao are commonly grown under shade trees, many writers seem to believe that these plants need shade. This may be true in part, but more important is the fact that the shade trees protect the soil against excessive losses of moisture and undesirable changes in soil composition, texture, and structure and thus prevent a reduction of the quantity of humus in the soil. Most of the commonly used shade trees are legumes which, in addition to shade, supply litter and nitrogen and help to increase the moisture-holding capacity of the soil, thus reducing the danger of erosion. *Erythrina micropteryx* Poepp., *Erythrina lithosperma* Miq., *Leucaena glauca* Benth., *Albizia moluccana* Miq., *Albizia chinensis* Merr., *Albizia falcata* Backer, *Pithecellobium dulce* Benth., or Manila tamarind, and *Peltophorum pterocarpum* Backer are especially useful in this respect.

⁶⁷ Haïnes: "The Uses and Control of Natural Undergrowth," 1934.

⁶⁸ For a very extensive list of cover crops, green manures, and shade trees, see Heyne: *De nuttige planten van Nederlandsch-Indië*, Vol. 3, 1927. See also International Institute of Agriculture: *op. cit.*

thinly settled areas of Laos, Cambodia, western Cochinchina, and the mountainous regions of Annam and Tongking are comparable to the Outer Islands. Moreover, the Annamese is as reluctant as the Javanese to leave his native village and settle among people who do not speak his language nor follow his customs. The few colonization experiments⁴ that have been made in Indochina in recent years have brought out many of the same lessons as did the early trial period in the Indies.

IC
133

IC
166
186

The necessity was felt for organizing this movement carefully, preferably by groups of families from the same village headed by their chiefs, who alone are capable of maintaining the cohesion necessary if the Tonkinese are to settle down to their ordinary way of living immediately after their establishment in the settlement areas.⁵

Here, too, the need for population adjustment has become so pressing that resettlement measures will have to be started on a large scale after the war.

000

Industrialization also has been advocated for Indochina. In contrast to the Philippines and the Indies, Indochina has most of the basic raw materials for heavy as well as for secondary industry. Mercantilistic considerations, however, deterred France from industrializing the country. It was not until 1938 that growing unemployment and population pressure finally led the government to initiate a compromise program of promoting secondary industries.

IC
433
654

Migration across international boundaries in Southeastern Asia was, and probably will be, negligible; almost all such migrants who had before the war entered the countries encircling the South China Sea came from China or India, the principal exception being the Javanese in Malaya. Most of the latter entered the country as plantation laborers but ultimately settled on the land and engaged in rice cultivation. This development was beneficial to both countries; on the one hand the laborers and their families did not return to their overcrowded villages in Java and on the other hand they increased the rice production of Malaya. The Malays accept the Javanese readily as both are Moslem and of the same racial stock. There would be no reason to advocate a settlement of Javanese in the Philippines or Thailand or of Annamese in Malaya or Borneo, or of Filipinos in Cambodia or New Guinea so long as there was sufficient suitable agricultural land available within the boundaries of the native countries of the prospective pioneers.

SEA
167
M
167
243
563

In the past, Southeastern Asia did not to any great extent enjoy a free exchange of ideas and information. Identical problems were often tackled without the benefit of knowledge gained from the experience of a neighboring country.

SEA
177

⁴ International Labour Office: *Labour Conditions in Indo-China*, 1938, pp. 216-241. See also Brévié: "Conseil supérieur de la colonisation," 1938, pp. 715-756; and Services du Protectorat: "Activité colonisatrice du Tonkin," 1938, pp. 757-779.

⁵ International Labour Office: *op. cit.*, p. 236.

INTRODUCTION

xxiii

symbols of our age—the Petrol Pump, the Pylon, the 'Dust Bowl', the Automat, 'Mass Media', the chilling Neon Sign—there is a shrinking of the soul and a poignant yearning for the glory that was Angkor and the grandeur that was Chang An. Yet it is in its effective organs—the Assembly Line, the Tennessee Valley Authority, 'E.R.P.', and the Research Stations—that our robotic civilization throbs; not in the cult of lost causes or impossible loyalties, nor in our academies, our museums, nor our half-empty cathedrals. 184 178

At least it is the material aspects of our civilization which appeal to the awakening consciousness of the peoples of the Far East. Whether they will adopt capitalist, socialist, or communist social organization as a means of securing the coveted gadgets of the West that mean a higher standard of living is another matter. Dr Joseph Needham, for example, says that there is no reason to think that the Chinese will not make as convinced socialists as anybody else, but that there are certain directions in which Chinese thinking might have a profound effect upon the nature of the society of the future, perhaps in the matter of juristic security of the individual, and in the forms which the numinous will take in that society. However, there is far less reason to believe that they will adopt democracy, and Communism, being dictatorial, they will probably find more natural and acceptable than democratic socialism.¹

This survey is of the Chinese in the regions of Tropical Asia, and often in the course of our narrative the question already posed as to the power of this and other peoples to absorb Western ideas without changing their own essential nature will arise either tacitly or explicitly. In other words, can the basic institutions of these peoples meet the impact of Western industrial civilization or of Marxism without disintegrating? 121 177

Chinese civilization is based on ancestor worship, the family system, on Confucianism (which incorporates these principles), and on Buddhism and Taoism. The staunchest supporters of these religions could scarcely deny that Buddhism and Taoism as moral forces are in complete decay in China and have been so for a very long time.² Whatever their surviving effectiveness they cannot by 000

¹ J. Needham, 'Confucianism after 2000 Years', in the *Manchester Guardian*, 29 August 1949.

² To realize the formalism and religiosity into which Buddhism had declined by last century, one has only to observe the *chü-jen* (Master) of the late Ch'ing dynasty who, to prepare his character for office, suddenly takes an interest in practical benevolence. He ostentatiously burns incense and gives alms. If he sees

000 that the Chinese Communists consider the present revolution as an indigenous movement—not Russian-inspired—and at the same time they have no difficulty in regarding themselves as orthodox Marxists.

183 In the area covered by this study the main trend of European colonial policy has been in the direction of encouraging the forces of native conservatism to resist innovation. European colonial administrators frequently evince an affection for feudal institutions, a reverence for Mohammedanism, a respect for *adat* law and for princely succession and privilege in excess of that of the native aristocracies themselves. It happens sometimes that existing institutions which had been crystallized by European intervention are sustained only by foreign authority, and in extreme cases, if the sustentation ceased, would dissolve into nothingness as in Poe's *Case of Dr. Valdemar* when death had occurred but dissolution was temporarily suspended by a hypnotic trance.¹

000 So much discussion of the general considerations governing the area of our inquiry has been necessary to give a background for our survey of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. But before proceeding to give an outline of our subject, there is one further observation we should make. This is that the survival of particular forms of organization is one thing; the survival of the race or community is another. It is likely that whatever happens the Chinese, both at home and overseas, will retain considerable social and cultural coherence, besides a strong sense of being 'Chinese'. It is his patience in adversity, his adaptability, his determination, his good humour, and his resilience that makes the individual Chinese, male or female, such an admirable biological specimen, and it is his social qualities (given proper treatment) that make him such a valuable unit in this Southeast Asian society. At the present time the Chinese of the Nanyang are in a dilemma, but this work should show that it is their superiority in resource, ability, and industry to the people among whom they live rather than their vicious propensities that makes them constitute a 'problem'.

The cartoon for our picture stands before us in bold charcoal

¹ Poe's description was more vivid but perhaps a little too strong for the present context. British policy in British India favoured 'modernization (e.g. Dalhousie's policy) while in the Indian States it generally favoured 'traditionalism'.

CHAPTER II

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH
SOUTHEAST ASIA¹

CHINA's intercourse overland with the countries on her southern border is of a much greater order of antiquity than her contacts by sea. Her soldiers were in Tongking and Annam in the third century B.C.; thereafter they penetrated to Cambodia, then to Siam, the last-named being reached by sea. Here there was a halt for a considerable time before her navigators went on to Malaya, Sumatra, and Java. The process took many centuries, and for long intervals there is a complete lack of information regarding the Southeast Asian countries.² Merchants

¹ Much of our information regarding the earlier history of Southeast Asia is derived from Chinese sources, but we should in this chapter be on our guard against identifying Chinese *knowledge* of the region with Chinese *contacts* with it. No doubt, of course, some of the information was obtained from Chinese who had actually visited the countries of the region, but much also was at second-hand and, at that, recorded often a considerable period after the time to which it relates.

In recent years a great deal has been added to our knowledge by the researches of orientalists and archaeologists, but these additions have often been independent and disassociated from one another, and the problem of the identification of geographical names has meant that places—often whole countries—have moved their location all over the map as learned discussion has displaced or refixed them. There has for long been a crying need to systematize the existing knowledge of Southeast Asia and to give more certainty and coherence to the early history, and this is what Sir Roland Braddell has been attempting to do since 1935 in his series of studies on 'Ancient Times in the Malay Peninsula' in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. ('An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Times in the Malay Peninsula and the Straits of Malacca, continued as Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya'; *JRASMB*, vol. xiii, pt. 2, vol. xiv, pt. 3, vol. xv, pt. 3, vol. xvii, pt. 1, vol. xix, pt. 1.) Our concern is not directly with the subject of these inquiries, but we shall keep these studies closely in mind when outlining Chinese contacts with the southeastern areas of the Asiatic continent. What we shall have to say will often be in repetition or in summary of the remarks made in the separate country studies, but this is with the intention of giving the reader at the outset a glance over the entire area.

² This seems to be true as a generalization, though the *Han Shu*, vol. xxviii, speaks of voyages in the Han dynasty to Jihnan and Hsiuwenhopu taking five months, to Touyüankuo taking four months, and to Ilumeikuo taking about twenty days. See Feng Ch'eng-chün, *Nan Yang Chiao Tung Shih* (History of Chinese Relations with the Nanyang) p. 1 (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1937). (The place-names are here given in mandarin, but the foreign investigator who endeavours to identify ancient Chinese place-names in Southeast Asia would be well advised first to give the characters their phonetic equivalents in ancient

- 177 from the West passed across Central Asia into China in the Han
175 and later dynasties by routes that skirted the northern and southern
slopes of the Tarim river basin, but they also came into the empire
by way of the south, up the rivers of what is now Burma and across
the hills into the present Yunnan, and by the longer sea route to the
south coast. As early as the second century B.C. there appear to
have been Chinese trade routes through Yunnan to the Irrawaddy
and Salween valleys. For a time the main port in the south was in
the future Tongking, and it was not until later centuries that it was
supplanted by Canton. It was to Loyang that in A.D. 166 came an
embassy of Westerners claiming to be sent by their King, who is
supposed to have been the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius
Antoninus (An-tun).¹

Our earliest and surest information is of the Chinese intercourse
with the countries sharing a land frontier with China on the south-
west, and first of all in point of time comes Annam.

During the Han dynasty there existed a kingdom known as
Nan-Yüeh (Nam-Viet) which extended from the region of Canton
far into the Indo-Chinese peninsula to the present central Annam.²
In 111 B.C. this kingdom was conquered by the Chinese and was
divided into nine districts, one of which, Chiuchen (Annamese
Cu'uchan), corresponds roughly to the present province of Thanh-
hoa in northern Annam.³ It is likely that Chinese suzerainty ex-

Chinese according to Karlgren's *Analytical Dictionary of Sino-Japanese* (Paris, 1923).

¹ See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: their History and Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York, Macmillan, 1946) p. 123.

Among the recent finds at Go Oc Eo was a gold medal bearing an image of Antoninus Pius with a date which corresponds to A.D. 152, showing that at an early date Funan (the ancient State in southern Annam) had connexions, direct or indirect, with the western Mediterranean. See G. Coedès, *Les états hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (Paris, E. de Boccard, 1948) pp. 38-9, 89.

² The recently published work of Professor Olov R. T. Janse, *Archaeological Research in Indo-China* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1947), greatly extends our existing knowledge of the Chinese remains in the region. Professor Janse's historical summary is here followed.

³ Édouard Chavannes, trans., *Les Mémoires Historiques de Se-Ma T'ien* (Paris, Laroux, 1895-1905) i. 87 and ii. 168, cited by Janse, op. cit. p. xvi. And Léonard Aurousseau, 'La Première Conquête des Pays Annamites', *BEFEO*, vol. xxii, pp. 137-264, and vol. xiv, pp. 9, 13. Cited by Janse at same place.

Wang Wen-yuan (op. cit. p. 4), citing Wang Ton-lin, *Histoire du Peuple Chinois* (in Chinese), and D. Maspero, 'Étude d'Histoire d'Annam, III, Commanderie de Siang', *BEFEO*, vol. iii (Hanoi, 1918) pp. 11-28, gives a somewhat different account of this early period. He says that in the year 214 B.C. the first Emperor of the Chin dynasty, Shih Huangti, sent 500,000 Chinese—soldiers,

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 13

tended even farther south, though in an indefinite way. However, 177 •
to date there has been no archaeological evidence of any Chinese 175
settlement of the Han dynasty farther south than a spot immediately below Thanhhoa in the provinces of Nghean and Hatinh.

After the native chief of Chiuchen had yielded to the Chinese without putting up any resistance, he was retained in his position with the title of T'aishou.¹

The new masters of the southern territory, the 'Sons of Han' as they called themselves, ruled at first with moderation, allowing to the natives a considerable degree of freedom, but about the beginning of the Christian era they adopted a sterner attitude. At least this was so in the case of Tongking where, according to Chinese records, the Emperor Hsi Kuang (A.D. 1-25)² 'transformed the people through the rites and by justice', and it is most probable that the Chinese attitude towards the natives of Chiuchen was the same. It was this heavier hand of alien government, aiming at securing the rapid sinicization of the subdued barbarians, which no doubt aroused the spirit of resistance, for in A.D. 40 Cheng-Tse (Tr'ung-Trac in Annamese), the daughter of a native chief of Tongking from Mileng (Annamese, Milinh), stirred up a rebellion which succeeded temporarily in driving out the Chinese, and the native chiefs of Chiuchen joined in the struggle.

In the present state of knowledge it is impossible to establish with precision the dates of the earlier Chinese settlements in Chiuchen, but Professor Janse thinks it very likely that some pioneers ventured to immigrate thither in the third century B.C., and this is the time when the Chinese began to infiltrate into northern Indochina, especially Tongking. In any case there must have been a considerable intercourse between southern China and Thanhhoa at the end of the third or at least at the beginning of the second century B.C. To a certain extent this supposition can be corroborated by archaeology (e.g. from examples in the 'Huai Valley' style).

peasants, and those condemned to banishment, to take possession of Nam-Viet 'the land beyond the southern border'. After the conquest the country was divided into three commands, that of Nanhai, corresponding probably to the present province of Kwangtung, that of Kweilin in the present-day Kwangsi, and that of Shiang in Tongking and north Annam. These (says Wang Wen-yuan) marked the foundation of the first important Chinese colony in Indochina.

¹ H. Maspero, *BEFEO*, vol. xxxvii, pp. 263, 264, note 5, cited by Janse, loc. cit.

² H. A. Giles lists seven Emperors from A.D. 1 to 25, but not this one.

177 Professor Janse makes the following interesting observations on
the period:¹

175

It can be assumed that the first Chinese who ventured into the country and mingled with the natives were journeying merchants or artisans. Even to-day Chinese peddlers are highly regarded among the natives because of their skill in commerce and craftsmanship. As they are generally fairly well-to-do, they are much sought after by the families of the aboriginal chieftains. Thus many of these modern settlers bring with them into Tongking and Northern Annam Chinese crafts and customs. What is happening to-day in this respect has certainly been going on not merely for centuries but for millenia. . . . In the wake of these traders men certainly came the civil and military mandarins, accompanied by the less welcome tax-collector, and by political refugees.

At this early time (Henri Maspero points out) the entire territory was covered with marshes and forests in which elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers abounded and in which the aboriginals lived by hunting and fishing, eating pythons and wild beasts killed by their bone-tipped arrows. To this diet they added small crops from their primitive rice-fields which they prepared by burning down a part of the forest before the rainy season, without cultivating or irrigating the area. Only around the centres of administration, under the influence of the Chinese governors, especially the prefect Jen Yen, had they begun to till the soil in the manner of the Chinese.²

Such was the land which the Chinese called the 'Kingdom of the Naked'. It was not until after the victorious campaign of Ma Yuan at the beginning of the Christian era that the Chinese settled on any large scale. Archaeological evidence of this is to be found on the brick tombs of the later Han discovered in Thanhhoa. Among the most fascinating funerary objects unearthed by Dr. Janse are models of farm-houses or, in some cases, probably manor-houses, consisting of quadrangular yards surrounded by walls and a variety of buildings. Some are even provided with furniture, such as ovens, troughs, &c. They give an excellent picture of early Chinese settlements in Annam.

It will be convenient here to discontinue the outline of Sino-Annamese contacts and to resume it in the part of this survey dealing with Indochina, turning our attention to the question of the antiquity of Chinese intercourse with Malaysia far away to the

¹ *op. cit.* p. xvi.

² H. Maspero, *op. cit.* p. 12, cited by Janse, *op. cit.* p. xvi.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 15

south. According to the consensus of opinion, the date of the first Chinese association with these regions goes back to the third and even fourth centuries B.C. Dr Heine-Geldern in 1934 pointed out the stylistic similarities between some of the prehistoric stone sculptures of the Pasemah region in southern Sumatra and those standing at the tomb of the Chinese general Huo K'iu-ping in Shensi province in China, erected in 117 B.C. This, he says, seemed to indicate more or less intimate contacts with China, to be dated probably in the second and first centuries B.C. A decade later the same authority again referred to his own statement and pointed out that since then Chinese objects of the Han dynasty had actually been found in Indonesia. Moreover, a considerable number of Chinese sepulchral pottery vessels of the Han period had been excavated in Sumatra, Java, and Borneo, and one of them, from Sumatra, bore an inscription dating it 45 B.C.¹ From these finds, De Flines inferred, no doubt correctly, that Chinese colonists or merchants must have lived in Indonesia as early as the Han period. Also from Sumatra comes a bowl engraved with designs of persons in Chinese dresses and of horses in Han style, and other pieces of evidence included a Chinese bronze dagger-axe (*ko*) which was said to have come from Sumatra, and another from Java.

Taking all into account [Dr Heine-Geldern writes] one may come to the conclusion that direct Chinese influence in Indonesia goes back at least to the early Han period, that is at the very latest to the 1st century B.C. However, the ornamental designs of the Dyak tribes of Borneo and of the Ngada of Flores are so clearly related to Chinese designs of the late Chou period that one can hardly avoid the inference that Chinese contacts started as early as the beginning of the third century B.C., and probably earlier.

The investigation of this very early period of intercourse is almost exclusively a monopoly of the archaeologist and of the anthropologist, and what conclusions are to be drawn from the finds must remain a matter of some delicacy to the non-expert in these fields. Nevertheless it is important to note the difference of opinion between some of the schools of thought concerning the degree of Chinese influence on the regions of Southeast Asia. Speaking of

¹ R. Heine-Geldern, *Prehistoric Research in the Netherlands Indies* (New York, Southeast Asia Institute, 1945) p. 147. See also the same author, *The Archaeology and Art of Sumatra*.

- 177 the intercourse of a much later period, the second Sung dynasty
175 onwards, Fay Cooper Cole remarks:

These early contacts were primarily for trade and, while they did help to shape the history of Malaysia, they seldom were intimate enough to introduce Chinese methods, such as the potter's wheel; few Chinese words entered the language; and the influence of their political and religious ideas was nil.¹

To this we may object that Chinese methods of agriculture, at least, through these same contacts had a profound effect on the economy of the Southeast Asian countries. None the less, Hindu influence upon Southeast Asia has been culturally much more important than Chinese, and in the sphere of navigation in the first centuries of the Christian era it was the Arabs, the Indians, and the Persians who made their way to China and the Chinese who, generally speaking, stayed at home. There was a colony of Arabs in Sumatra at a very early date, and they had a counting-house at Canton as early as A.D. 300.²

Latourette says that 'Chinese merchants seem not to have ventured very far afield, and to have left chiefly to strangers the initiative in foreign trade, but outsiders found China a profitable country with which to deal'. Lack of enterprise is also attributed to the Chinese by Groeneveldt, the pioneer writer on Chinese intercourse with Southeast Asia, who remarks:

A careful perusal of the geographical literature of the ancient Chinese has shown that they have not gained their knowledge of South-eastern Asia by bold voyages of discovery: slowly and cautiously they have crept along its shores, probably not venturing to a country before they have become acquainted with it through others.³

And Kuwabara (cited by Braddell) says, 'the Chinese trading ships before the T'ang era were inferior in all respects to those of the South Sea countries'. Although it must be conceded that the Chinese were behind the Middle Eastern races in enterprise or curiosity, the remarks of Groeneveldt apply in a measure to all other peoples who have come into Southeast Asia. Were their

¹ Fay Cooper Cole, *The Peoples of Malaysia* (New York, Van Nosstrand, 1945) p. 27.

² Braddell, op. cit. *JRASMB*, vol. xx, pt. 2 (1947) p. 8.

³ W. P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca; Miscellaneous papers relating to the Indian Archipelago* (London, Trübner, 1887) i. 126-262.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 17

explorations of the coasts of Borneo (asks Mr Tom Harrisson) any slower or more cautious than those of the Portuguese? On the contrary there is every indication that there was a regular trade on a mass scale for centuries back. Certainly by the fourth and fifth centuries Chinese ships were feeling their way along the coasts and over the seas to meet the Arabs, Persians, and Indians part way. 177 •
175

The reason for Chinese comparative dilatoriness in utilizing the sea routes on their own account may have been their sense of national sufficiency, and the feeling that they had nothing of great value to obtain from the regions of the south, but none the less their influence spread out over the land routes through the agency of the Arab and Indian traders. 'It is clear that at the time when the European barbarians of the north were conquering Rome, a southward movement in the Far East was taking place—the flow of the cultured Chinese into Malay lands, and the spread of Chinese civilization in Malaysia.'¹ At the same time the main colonizing activity was by Indians. Individual Chinese pilgrims and travellers, such as the Buddhist monk, Fa Hsien (or Fa Hien), went overland to India, visited Ceylon by sea, and arrived in what was either Java or Malaya in A.D. 413, and I-tsing, much later, in A.D. 692, reached Lang-ya-si, identified as Langkasuka, a kingdom in the Malay peninsula. Fa Hsien found no Chinese in Java or Malaya (which-ever it may have been), though his eyes filled with tears, he tells us, at the sight of a Chinese taffeta fan, for he had been away from home for thirteen years.²

It is not perhaps remarkable that the Chinese of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries left most of the colonizing initiative to others, for, quite apart from their self-sufficiency, these were the Dark Ages of Chinese history when warfare and foreign invasion were almost incessant. Nevertheless, in the first Sung dynasty (A.D. 420–

¹ G. Nye Steiger, H. Otley Beyer, and Conrado Benitez, *A History of the Orient* (Boston, Ginn & Co., 1926) p. 202 and passim.

² *Fa Hsien Fo Kuo Chi*, the record of Fa Hsien's voyages, has been translated by Samuel Beal as 'An Account of the Buddhist Countries' (London, Trübner, 1869), by J. Legge (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1866), and re-translated by H. A. Giles (Cambridge University Press, 1923). Rémusat's French translation is earlier (1836).

Giles gives the track of the voyage of Fa Hsien from Ceylon to China as being via the Straits of Sunda, whereas W. A. Grimes (*JRASMB*, vol. xix, pt. 1 (February 1941)), a meteorologist, basing his views on a study of the winds near the equator, considers that he went via the Straits of Malacca. This is also the view of Braddell, who thinks that Fa Hsien's *Ye-po-ti* was not Java but Malaya. (*JRASMB*, vol. xix, pt. 1 (1947) p. 25.)

- 177 79) missions from these southeastern countries made their appear-
175 ance in China, and after the Liang dynasty (A.D. 502-57) envoys
came from over the sea every year for the purpose of getting an
almanac and of acquitting themselves of the duty of tribute in
greater number than in any former time.¹

Reference in Chinese history to countries and places in these territories does not necessarily mean that they were known to the Chinese by direct contact. An early voyage, however, was in A.D. 607 when the Emperor Sui Yang-ti sent a mission by sea to Siam to open up commercial relations with that country.² But the sprinkling of references to places, probably in this Southeast Asian area, of obscure identity which may be found in the History of the Liang Dynasty (502-57) is succeeded in the History of the T'ang Dynasty (618-907) by information regarding definite countries which has a much surer feel. For example, we hear (and believe) that between 756 and 779 three envoys of Java arrived in China and that in the year 813 further envoys arrived at the capital with presents of four negro slaves, parrots of different colours, pinka-birds (not identified), and other gay trifles. The Emperor honoured the envoy with the title of Left Defender of the Office of the Four Inner Gates, and when the recipient wanted to waive the title in favour of his younger brother, the Emperor praised him for his unselfishness and bestowed a title on both of them.³

We are now definitely in the era of the tribute-bearing missions which soon took on the character of trading expeditions since the Emperor invariably presented to the envoys gifts equal to or greater in value than those they had brought. The missions were very numerous and a mere recital of them would not add much to our enlightenment. They had always, of course, a purely diplomatic appearance, especially those sent on the accession of a new Emperor or a new dynasty.

Between 1209 and 1214 a book was written by Chao Ju-kua, a member of the imperial family of the Sung dynasty (960-1280) and superintendent and commissioner of Customs at Ch'üanchowfu, a coast town to the north of Amoy. This book, based on information

¹ Braddell, op. cit. *JRASMB*, vol. xix, pt. 1 (1941) p. 21.

² Chau [sic] Ju-kua (late Sung Dynasty): *His work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, translated from the Chinese and annotated by Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill (St. Petersburg, Academy of Science, 1911) p. 8. The name of the work in Chinese is *Chu Fan Chi*.

³ *T'ang History*, Book 222, Part 2, Groeneveldt, p. 140.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 19

gained from merchants from India, Persia, Syria, and Arabia, gives facts concerning the countries and peoples of the West, including Spain, and of the Chinese trade with the Malaysian islands. (Some details from this work are cited both above and later in this chapter.)

In the History of the Sung Dynasty we have a detailed account of Java, including the observation: 'Their houses are handsome and are adorned with yellow and green tiles: when Chinese merchants arrive they are received as guests in a public building and what they eat and drink is copious and clean.'¹

In 1291 Angkor was visited by Marco Polo and the Lady Kutai, whom the Mongol Emperor of China was sending as a bride for the Khan of Persia, there to behold the fast-fading glories of the Khmer empire.² Five years later, one Chou Ta-kwan was a member of the Chinese mission sent to acquaint the King of Cambodia with the accession of Yüan Cheng, the new Emperor of China and grandson and successor of Kublai Khan. To this same Chou Ta-kwan we owe a vivid and detailed account of the Khmer empire.³ What concerns us here, however, is his remarks concerning his own countrymen who visited or were resident in Cambodia. Here are some of them rendered into English from Pelliot's translation.

The Chinese who follow the sea as a profession take advantage of their being in this country to dispense with wearing clothes. Rice is easy to obtain, women are easy to find, the houses are easy to run, personal property is easy to come by, commerce is easy to engage in. Thus there are constantly those who direct themselves toward this country.

In this country it is the women who are skilful in commerce. Thus a Chinese who arrives down there and take a wife profits in addition by her commercial aptitude.

This Chinese chronicler (says Mr Brodrick), with the typical prejudice of his people against frequent washing, wrote that, 'the people are often ill, owing to their too frequent baths and the incessant wasting of the heat'.

According to Chou Ta-kwan, the embassy to Cambodia in 1296 was entirely successful and homage was rendered to China, but (says Pelliot) '*peut être est-il trop intéressé dans l'affaire pour que nous accordions pleine créance à ses dires. En fait il n'y a aucune trace que des relations officielles régulières aient suivi la mission de 1296*'.

¹ Book 489. Groeneveldt, p. 141.

² A. H. Brodrick, *Little Vehicle* (London, Hutchinson, n.d. (1949?)) p. 156.

³ 'Tcheou-Ta-Kouan, Mémoires sur les coutumes de Cambodge' (trans. by Paul Pelliot), *BEFEO*, vol. ii, no. 2 (1902).

177 There is certainly no mention of Cambodia in the History of the
175 Yüan Dynasty.

It is first in the Yüan dynasty (A.D. 1280-1368) that action combines with colour to make real the machinations of Chinese imperial politics in these waters. In the year 1292 the Emperor Kublai Khan, no doubt envious of the growing influence of Java in further India and the eastern part of the archipelago, sent an expedition against the Javanese State of Singosari. He ordered the Governor of Fukien to send Shih Pi, Ike Mese, and Hau Hsing to collect from Kiangsi and Kiukiang soldiers to the number of 20,000 who were to be embarked in a thousand ships for the Southern Ocean. Shih Pi sailed with 5,000 men from Ch'üanchow, probably via the Paracel Islands, Macclesfield Bank (to give them their modern names), Annam (Giau-chi), and Champa, encountering bad weather on the way, and in the first moon of the following year they passed the Natuna Islands to a place which was probably Billiton in Java where the fleet stopped to cut timber to make small boats suitable for going up the rivers. An internal feud was in progress between native potentates and in this Shih Pi took sides, routing the army of Daha (Kediri).¹

But Shih Pi lost 3,000 of his men (largely, it seems, through sickness) and for this he was disgraced and ordered to receive seventeen strokes. But in 1295 he was restored to favour, and he died, high in honours, at the age of eighty-six.

The Ming History records that at this time Java was subdued,² but the truth is that the great expedition had failed and no new one was undertaken. The military expeditions of the Mongols had nowhere more than a temporary influence.

The empire of Sri Vijaya, which endured for many centuries, had its capital in Sumatra in the neighbourhood of Palembang. It included the Malay Peninsula under its sway. Eventually it decayed under Chola (Coromandel) raids, the revolt of Melayu (Jambi), and attacks from neighbouring kingdoms. The Sung chronicles have many references to Sri Vijaya's wars. The empire eventually disappeared and was succeeded by Jambi. Jambi in turn (between

¹ For an account of the complex politics and strategy of this expedition see E. S. de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands Indies* (Rotterdam, W. L. & J. Brusse, 1938) i. 139-40.

² Book 324. It appears from Chinese records and the account of Marco Polo that Tuban, Sedayu, and Tjanggu were at that time prosperous commercial towns. De Klerck, *op. cit.* p. 140.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 21

1338 and 1365) succumbed to Majapahit, whose seat of government was in Java. Majapahit was warlike and destructive: it sacked ports in Borneo, Surabaya, Ceram, and Lombok, and finally subjected Sri Vijaya's colonies in the Malay Peninsula.¹ 177 175

Palembang, near the east coast of Sumatra, fell into Chinese hands on the decay of Sri Vijaya and remained under them for about two hundred years. The Chinese who lived there followed piracy as a calling, using the port as a retreat and strongpoint. This town, then, was one of the earliest places in Southeast Asia where the Chinese settled in any numbers. San-fo-ts'i is a rival for the distinction (if, indeed, it were a Malayan territory distinct from Sri Vijaya), and when it faded in importance about the same time as Sri Vijaya, several thousand Chinese from Fukien and Canton who lived there began to govern themselves. In 1377 they had as their leader a man named Liang Tau-ming from Namhoi in Kwangtung.

Meanwhile, in 1349, Wang Ta-yuan, a Chinese merchant, writes of Tumasik, or Old Singapore.² His account gives the very definite impression that here also was a fairly large settlement of Chinese. This is the first colony of Chinese in the Malay Peninsula of which we have any record.

In a later chapter in the history of the Chinese in Malaya we shall discuss the question whether the Chinese formed any permanent settlement in the Malay kingdom of Malacca, which was founded about A.D. 1400 and endured until the Portuguese conquest of 1511. The chances are (we shall decide) that the merchants who visited the place were merely seasonal visitors, coming down from China with one monsoon and going back with the other. But it was in the early years of the Malay kingdom that the Emperors of the Ming dynasty began to send expeditions to the Southern Ocean and beyond on a grand scale.³

In 1403, says the Ming History,⁴ the Emperor sent the eunuch

¹ See Sir Richard Winstedt, *Malaya and its History* (London, Hutchinson, 1948) p. 29 ff.

There are maps showing the probable extent of Sri Vijaya and Majapahit accompanying H. Otley Beyer, 'The Philippines before Magellan', *Asia*, vol. xxi (1921). ² See p. 282.

³ In summarizing the Ming voyages the writer has to be much on his guard. The facts and translations of the authorities of last century, particularly Rockhill, have been subjected to the searching scrutiny of Professor Duyvendak, and many errors and slips have been revealed.

⁴ J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'The true dates of the Chinese Maritime Expeditions in the early fifteenth century', *T'oung Pao*, xxxiv (Leyden, 1939).

- 177 Yin Ch'ing as envoy to Malacca with presents of silk brocade.¹ But
175 more noteworthy was the visit a few years afterwards by the famous
Grand Eunuch, Cheng Ho, later deified as Sam-po-kung.

Altogether Cheng Ho and his colleagues, the Grand Eunuch Wang Chin, and the assistant envoys, the Grand Eunuchs Hung Pao and Yung Chen, together with the Senior Lesser Eunuch Chang Ta, commanding the fleet, made seven voyages, in 1405, 1407, 1409, 1414, 1417, 1421, and 1431 (these being the years in which the expeditions set out).² The account published by them in 1431 is in their collective name, but it is not clear which of them took part in the several voyages. The following is abstracted from their account as quoted by Professor Duyvendak:

Voyage I

In the third year of Yung Lo (1405), 'commanding the fleet', we went to Ku-li (Calicut) and other countries. At that time the pirate Ch'en Tsu-yi and his followers were assembled at San-fo-ts'i (Palembang) where they plundered the native merchants. We captured the leader alive and returned in the fifth year (1407).

Voyage II

In the fifth year of Yung Lo (1407), 'commanding the fleet', we went to Kua-Wa (Java), Ku-li (Calicut), Ko-chih (Cochin), and Hsien-lo (Siam). The kings of these countries all presented us as tribute with local products, precious birds, and (rare) animals. We returned in the seventh year (1409).

Voyage III

In the seventh year of Yung Lo (1409), 'commanding the fleet', we went to the countries visited before and took our route by the country of Hsi-lan-shan (Ceylon). Its King Ya-lieh-jo-nai-erh (Alagakkonara) was guilty of a gross lack of respect and plotted against the fleet. Owing to the manifest answer (to prayer) of the divine power (the plot) was discovered and thereupon the king was captured alive. In the ninth year (1411), on our return, he was presented (to the throne as a prisoner). Subsequently he received the imperial favour of returning to his own country.

¹ Ming History, Book 325.

² 'What are today called the Indian Ocean or the Nanyang were formerly called the Nan Hai (Southern Sea) or the Nan-hsi Hai (Southwestern Sea). The sea to the south of the Gulf of Siam was given the special name of Ch'ang Hai.' Feng Ch'eng-chün, *Nan Yang Chiao Tung Shih (History of Chinese Relations with the Nanyang)* (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1937) p. 91.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 23

The fourth voyage (1414) was to Ormuz and other places and the fleet returned in 1415. In that year the king of the country of Man-la-Chia (Malacca) came in person with his wife and son to present tribute. On the fifth voyage (1417-19) the envoys visited Ormuz again and also Aden, Mogadisho, Calicut, &c., bringing back zebras, lions, camels, and ostriches. Ormuz figured once more in the sixth voyage (1421-2) and in the sixth year of Hsüan-ti (1431), 'starting once more for the barbarian (countries) in order to make known the imperial commands', the fleet sailed for the Western Ocean, returning in 1433.

The object of the voyages was to enhance the prestige of the Ming dynasty and, incidentally, to keep a look out for any rebels against the dynasty who might have taken refuge in the Nanyang. 'The Imperial Ming dynasty', proclaimed the high envoys, 'in unifying seas and continents, surpasses the Three Dynasties and even goes beyond the Han and the T'ang. The countries beyond the horizon and from the ends of the earth have all become subjects (of the Imperial Ming). . . . The barbarians from beyond the seas . . . , have come to audience bearing precious objects and presents.'

Says Professor Duyvendak in another place:¹

These embassies must have been stupendous undertakings; fleets are described of 62 vessels carrying 37,000 soldiers; more than 20 countries in the Indian archipelago and the Indian Ocean were visited; chiefs and kings, like those of Palembang and of Ceylon, were deposed and sent as captives to China, and members of the expeditions went as far as Aden and Mecca, bringing messages from the Chinese court. Most surprising of all, these fleets were commanded by eunuchs, of whom none is more famous than Cheng Ho, known as San-Pao-T'ai-Ch'ien.

The dynastic histories have a good deal to say of Java during the period of Cheng Ho's voyages. The denizens of the country were divided into three kinds of people—first, the Chinese who resided there temporarily and whose clothes and food were fine and nice; secondly, the traders from other countries, who resided there for a longer time, and who also were quite civilized and clean; and thirdly, the natives of the country, who were very dirty and were fond of eating snakes, insects, and worms, and who slept and ate together with the dogs. From Grissé, in 1411, a Chinese from Canton sent representatives to the Chinese court and a letter offer-

¹ 'Ma Huan Re-examined', *Proceedings of the Royal Academy of Science* (Amsterdam, 1933). (On the *Ying yai sheng lan*, ascribed to Ma Huan.)

177 ing produce of the country as tribute. Tuban was the native name
175 of a place near Grissé where more than a thousand families lived,
all under one chief. Amongst them were many Chinese from Canton and Changchow (near Amoy) who were settled there. Fowls, goats, fish, and vegetables were cheap there. Surabaya was another place where there were many Chinese. Later it seems that Tuban was deserted by them because of its insecurity (there being numerous robbers) and all trade went to a new place, Yortan (situated in the present district of Paduran), but it subsequently disappeared.

There is in the Chinese records a large number of references to the Chinese in Java and Sumatra in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the eve of the European incursions into these waters. Many pirates are mentioned, including Ch'en Tsu-yi who was seized by Cheng Ho. Later on, in the reign of Chia Ching (1522-66), another notorious Cantonese robber flourished. Besides his main business of robbery, he had a large commercial establishment in which many Hokkiens were employed.

Regarding the Chinese navigation of these seas, it has been remarked that their junks always sailed with the trade winds, going with the northeast monsoon and returning home with the southwest monsoon. On the outward voyage it was the custom to follow the Asiatic coast, but on the home trip the ships of Amoy probably sailed along the west coasts of Borneo, Palawan, Luzon, and Formosa. Moreover, the sailing directions in Chinese books indicate that ships bound for the Sulu Archipelago, eastern Borneo, and, in later centuries, even for Banjermassin and Java, first crossed over to the island of Luzon and sailed southwards through the Philippines.¹

This opinion is consistent with that of Sir Roland Braddell who says:

Summarizing, we suggest that both *a priori* reasoning and such data as we possess lead to a very early knowledge of Borneo on the part of the Indians and Chinese and that in the case of both of them probably, but the latter certainly, they must have been familiar with Borneo before they became familiar with Java, the navigation to which was far more difficult and more dangerous.²

¹ G. N. Steiger, *op. cit.* pp. 202, 203. See also p. 679 of this Survey, and the remarks on Chinese navigation of Southeast Asian waters in J. V. Mills, 'Malaya in the Wu-pei-chih Charts', *JRASMB*, vol. xv, pt. 3 (December 1937).

² *op. cit.* *JRASMB*, vol. xix, pt. 1 (February 1941) p. 72.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 25

Let us now go back for a while and consider the early history of the Chinese contacts with Borneo in more detail, keeping in mind the implications raised by Dr Heine-Geldern's revelations of the finds there and in Indonesia. 177
175

The credit for bringing Brunei to the official notice of China seems to have been due to neither the Chinese nor the Borneans, but rather to the enterprising Arab traders of Canton and Ch'üan-chow. It is not known just how early these Arabs began trading in Brunei, but in 977 a certain Abu Ali and two other Arabs came to the Chinese court as envoys from the king of Brunei. From the twelfth to the fifteenth century accounts of Brunei, Sulu, Mindoro, and others of the Philippine Islands became more numerous. Before 1225 Chinese vessels were making trading trips to nearly all parts of the Philippines. Apart from Sulu, which had always maintained closer relations with Borneo than with the Philippines, the most important trade centre appears to have been Mindoro.¹

The traditions of Borneo and Sulu indicate that a Chinese province was established some centuries ago in the neighbourhood of the Kinabatangan River, and the province had dominion over the Sulu River. It is mainly accepted, too, that a daughter of a Chinese 'prince', who was in all probability the governor of the province referred to, came from the Kinabatangan River to marry the second sultan of Brunei, and from that couple originated the royal family of Brunei of the present day.

The statement that the Dusuns are 'half-Chinese' is frequently made by residents of Borneo. This theory has led to much controversy. In the middle of the last century a traveller in Sarawak, a Mr Witt, expressed himself strongly against any supposed Chinese mixture in the blood of the Dusuns, saying, 'I think no Chinese colonies ever existed in the north of Borneo', but the same traveller in a journey up the Pagalan River speaks of a tribe that was 'probably the result of an infusion of Chinese blood with the aboriginal races of Borneo'.² Regarding the Dyaks, Earl remarks that the Chinese of his time supposed them to be descended from a large body of their countrymen left by accident on the island, but this belief, he says, was entertained solely on the basis of the Chinese legend of the Kuni Balu snake whose stone was stolen by the

¹ Steiger, Otley Beyer, Benitez, op. cit. p. 205.

² Cited by Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (London, Truslove & Hanson, 1896) i. 24.

● 177 Emperor of China by the agency of Chinese who formed a chain
175 by the snake's lair to waiting junks. The stone was recovered
by the snake, but the human chain of Chinese remained to colonize
the country. Another legend of this nature concerned the origin of
the Bolupih race from a Chinese native union. C. A. de Crespigny
could see no similarity between the natives and the Chinese except
a turning-in of the upper eyelid in childhood, whereas St John
observed that the 'features of many are very like the Chinese—per-
haps a trace of that ancient kingdom that tradition fixes in this
neighbourhood'.¹ In the present century I. H. N. Evans has pro-
nounced strongly against the theory of Chinese admixture with the
Dusuns though he admits Chinese admixtures on the Klias Penin-
sula and the Kinabatangan River.²

But whatever the truth regarding the Chinese colonization of
Borneo in remoter times, it is certain that by the early nineteenth
century a considerable admixture of the races was in progress.
Intermarriage between Chinese men and Dyak women was com-
mon and St John, at the request of the Raja, opened a school for
the benefit of the offspring of such unions.

Truly speaking (St John adds) the Chinese women up here are them-
selves the offspring of mixed marriages, but having been brought up in
all the manners and customs of the Chinese, are looked upon as Chinese.
The settled agricultural tribes between the Brunei and Murudu Rivers
were considered good examples of Chinese and natives intermarrying.

Of special interest to the students of Chinese contacts with
Borneo is the evidence afforded by native agricultural methods and
the 'sacred jars'.

Sir Spenser St John describes the methods used by the native

¹ Ling Roth, op. cit. i. 57; *ibid.* p. 59.

² I. H. N. Evans, *Among Primitive Peoples in Borneo* (London, Seeley Service, 1932) p. 274 ff.

Mr Tom Harrison comments: 'How is it possible to conclude that the theory is not true, while at the same time admit Chinese admixtures on the Klias Peninsula and the Kinabatangan River? Such traditions do not persist unless there is some reason for them. In fact, they are to be found in some form or other, over a much wider area of Borneo, and were recorded by some of the very earliest travellers, such as the anonymous writer in the *Chinese Repository* of 1834, and Earl in 1837. The most that can be said is that the matter is not proven either way. . . . St John in 1858 found remains of extensive pepper gardens in the Madihit, ten days by canoe, through rapids etc., right up the Limbang and right in the interior. The oldest Muruts could then just remember these Chinese. The present inhabitants of the area have no idea there were ever Chinese there—a good example of the negative negative.'

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 27

people of Tumposok where he first saw natives ploughing. The plough was of a very simple construction, serving rather to scratch the ground than to turn it over, was entirely of wood, and was drawn by a buffalo, and its action was the same as if a pointed stick had been dragged through the land to a depth of about four inches. After ploughing, they used a rough kind of harrow. 'I think this superior agriculture', says St John, 'is obviously a remnant of Chinese civilization.'¹

Tangible evidence of Chinese contact with Sarawak is afforded by the 'sacred jars', undoubtedly of Chinese origin. The 'jar cult' played an important role not only in Borneo but also among the Moi of southern Indochina, in the Philippines, in Formosa, and various other parts of the Indonesian region. (Dr Heine-Geldern remarks that Professor Janse's recent discoveries in Indochina may help to solve the origin of this cult.) St John describes the several kinds of jars existing in Sarawak. The best known were the Gusi, the Rusa, and the Naga. The most valuable, the Gusi, was a green colour, about 18 inches in height, and was, from its medicinal properties, exceedingly sought after. One fetched at Tawaran the price of £400 to be paid in produce. The Naga was a jar two feet in height ornamented with Chinese dragons. This was at this time worth only £7-8; while the Rusa, covered with the figures of some kind of deer, was worth £15-16.² Another jar, the Ningkah, mentioned in another contemporary account, fetched \$150.³

These jars were the principal commodity in the Chinese trade with Borneo and other islands. This trade may have been of the 'silent' variety, when Chinese junks, laden with silk, beads, iron,

¹ It is interesting to compare this description with that of a native plough of supposedly Chinese origin in the Philippines (see p. 613), and there is a reference to another plough not of local design in Malaya (see p. 314).

² Ling Roth, op. cit. ii. 284.

Every Dyak tribe possessed some jars according to their riches or importance, though, as one European lady remarks, 'no one would suppose from their appearance that they were worth more than the common earthenware water-pots we use in our bath-houses'. They were, in fact (to judge from examples in the Sarawak Museum), of as cheap a quality as the Chinese trader could persuade the natives to purchase. Examples of these jars are illustrated in Plate 159 of N. Ottema, *Ceramiek Handboek*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam, J. H. de Bussy, 1946).

One special jar, owned by the Sultan of Brunei, was supposed to have magical qualities, and Bisayas used to come with presents for the Sultan to obtain in return a little water from the jar with which to sprinkle their rice-fields to ensure good crops.

³ L. W. Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East* (W. H. Allen, London, 1882) p. 153, cited by Ling Roth, op. cit. ii. 280.

177 copper pots, and many kinds of jars arrived off the coast and made
175 their presence known by beating on gongs. The natives would
bring to the beach whatever they had to trade and then retire to a
distance. The traders would take ashore what they considered the
proper equivalent in terms of their own goods, and if this proved
satisfactory they took the native articles and moved on to the next
settlement.¹ But whether or no this method of trading was usual
in later times, it seems that in the time spoken of by Chao Ju-kua
(12th-13th centuries) buying and selling were carried on in a more
friendly and civilized way. After a ship had arrived and had been
boarded by the natives they mingled freely with the ship's folk.
The custom was for native traders to assemble in crowds and carry
the goods away with them in baskets, 'and even if one cannot at
first know them and can but slowly distinguish the men who re-
move the goods there will be no loss'.²

More impressive, aesthetically speaking, than the jars are the
pottery and china revealed by the pick and spade in mineral ex-
ploration. Mr Helms records that on one occasion his party found
a number of paving tiles four inches thick, 'beautifully made of
pebbles, concrete, quartz, etc. They had been polished, were clearly
very old, and made by people of a higher civilization.' Were these,
by any chance, relics of Chinese settlement?

The coming of the Europeans caused a break in the trading rela-
tions between China, Borneo, and the other Malaysian islands which
had gone on for so long. In the year 1530 one of the functionaries
in the capital addressed a memorial to the throne respecting the
discontinuance of the tribute from Borneo. This memorial says:

During the period Cheng-te (1506-1521) the Franks (Portuguese) had
been violently spreading their influence and the tribute had ceased. A
few years afterwards the natives had tried to begin sending it again, but
it was evident that their regard for the Chinese empire had suffered very
much.

Finally, let us summarize what is known of Chinese intercourse
with the Philippines prior to the Spanish period.

It is at a comparatively late date that the Philippines are first
mentioned in Chinese history; and the fact is the more striking
(says Laufer) since some of the adjacent isles to the south are
touched upon much earlier. In the fifth year of Hung-wu (1372)
the first embassy arrived in China with tribute, and the Emperor

¹ Fay Cooper Cole, *op. cit.* p. 28.

² G. N. Steiger, *op. cit.* p. 205.

EARLY CHINESE CONTACTS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA 29

reciprocated by dispatching an official with presents of silk gauze woven of gold and coloured threads to the king of the country. But (Laufer warns us) 'From this first mention of the Philippines in Chinese history we should not be so narrow-minded as to infer that Chinese intercourse with the Philippines dates from just the year 1372; on the contrary, the fact that there was a Philippine embassy in that year points to a long commercial intercourse between the two peoples which had escaped the knowledge of the court historiographers at Peking.'¹ The statement made in the Imperial Geography of the Ming (*Ta Ming I Feng Chi*) that no investigation of Luzon had been made by previous generations is contradicted by the fact that Philippine tribes are described in Chao Ju-kua's work of the thirteenth century.

Since Laufer wrote there has been considerable further investigation of the subject, and the present state of knowledge can best be summarized in the words of Dr H. Otley Beyer:

It is improbable that many Chinese ships were engaged in this trade with the Philippines during the early period (at least before the late 11th-12th century part of it) and it is unlikely that there were any Chinese residents in the islands at that time . . . [re 12th-14th centuries] Chinese merchant colonies began to establish themselves in a few places where a fairly strong or well-organized native government gave prospect of protection. . . . With the death of Cheng Ho, however, and the passing of the Yung Lo regime, this Chinese attempt at dominions overseas also passed away . . . [re A.D. 1430-1450]. As Mohammedan influence spread eastward through the southern Philippines, and northward from Borneo into Luzon, the Siam and Indo-China trade was at first cut off, while the Chinese merchant vessels were forced to seek new trading routes leading around the eastern side of Luzon, and into the eastern Visayan Islands etc., where Islamic beliefs had not yet penetrated. . . . While the Chinese settlers intermarried freely in the country, built good houses, and taught their families better ways of living, they were not otherwise interested in converting or spreading new ideas among the native folk. Their influence was chiefly economic, and aside from the brief period of Yung Lo's empire, made no attempt to meddle or interfere with native political constitutions, social customs, or beliefs. . . .²

¹ Berthold Laufer, 'The Relations of the Chinese to the Philippine Islands', *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* (quarterly issue), vol. 1 (September 1907) p. 251.

² H. Otley Beyer, *Early History of Philippine Relationships to Foreign Countries, especially China* (Manila, National Printing Company for the University of the Philippines Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 1948).

121 What has been given above is only a brief outline of a vast sub-
167 ject of which the facts are, for many periods, largely unprecipitated.
177 In an attempt to confine this survey to manageable proportions and
to give it a contemporary focus, we have adopted the principle that
our interest in the Chinese of Southeast Asia begins in earnest only
when they had formed permanent settlements, and it is true to say
that the majority of such settlements still remaining, outside Annam
and Tongking, were founded within the last 350 years. Neverthe-
less, we should not forget that the stream of Chinese immigration
into the region, swelling into spate in the second and third decades
of the present century, was but an expansion of long pre-existing
rivulets of intercourse.

167 After the great military expeditions of the early Mings, the urge
to imperial expansion overseas appears to have gone out of the
175 Chinese. The self-contained spirit of the Middle Kingdom reas-
177 serted itself and the Emperors were content with adventures by
land. It would indeed be harder to explain why the urge arose at
all than why it subsided so soon. The fact remains that whereas the
colonization of the Europeans followed in the wake of their fleets
and soldiers or to lands obtained by treaty from the native rulers,
the Chinese in the last three and a half centuries have entered
Southeast Asia either as visiting merchants or as suppliants for
permission to remain from the Javanese Sultans, or from the
Spanish, Dutch, British, or French. They came no more as haughty
emissaries of the Dragon Throne, armed to the teeth to enforce the
imperial will, but as humble and peaceable shiploads of traders,
artisans, or coolies, waiting, like Czech or Italian peasants on Ellis
Island, for permission to enter the land of promise. But their
meekness and peaceableness were in the long run to be far more
forceful than the militancy of the Europeans; for where the latter
came in their tens the Chinese came in their thousands, and when
the Europeans have gone, they will remain.¹

¹ While this Survey was in the press there appeared 'The Khmer Empire and the Malay Peninsula', by Lawrence Palmer Briggs, *Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. ix, no. 3, May 1950, which adds valuable source material for Sino-Southeast Asia contacts.

Chinese

China AFI

668

THE CHINESE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

S native community. The Chinese National Government manifested
 578 an increasing solicitude for the *Hua Ch'iao*, the overseas Chinese,
 668 whom it regards almost as its children; it instructed its consular
 [871] officials to register all the Chinese within their jurisdiction, and
 they sent missions to inspect every activity of overseas Chinese
 C life. What is more, the Chinese Government took upon itself to
 578 direct the education of Chinese in the Nanyang, laying down the
 648 curriculum to be followed, and even introducing a system of
 668 grants-in-aid in competition with that of the local Government. It
 often happened that remote officials in Nanking or Chungking,
 very likely originating from one of the northern provinces and
 completely out of touch and sympathy with the Chinese of the
 Nanyang, claimed the right to direct their affairs. Even ethnically
 speaking the overseas Chinese might be nearer to the Siamese or
 Burmese, or (by intermarriage) to the Indonesians, than to a
 Chinese from Honam or Kansu. It was no wonder that Siam,
 Malaya, and the other countries of Southeast Asia saw an *imperium*
 in *imperio* growing up in their midst and began to fear for their
 S own eventual safety.

578 This development, then, we are constrained to regard as in
 668 many ways a misfortune for the overseas Chinese and for the
 177 countries in which they had made their home or wherein they
 C were sojourners. It arrested assimilation and erected a racial wall.
 578 At the same time the simultaneous growth of local nationalism
 668 encouraged the Chinese to look to their own country for pro-
 648 tection—a protection, it turned out, it was, because of its own
 177 internal division and weakness as a Power, in no position to give.
 Nor did the authorities in the one country of Southeast Asia
 where the Chinese now were the majority community offer any
 real encouragement to the local-born Chinese to regard Malaya
 as their own country and to resist the claims to control their
 destinies by a remote Government in a country they had never
 seen. The chance to extend the teaching of English to the com-
 munity was lost and for thousands the only means of receiving an
 education of any sort was in the Chinese Nationalist schools; the
 doors of the Malayan civil service were opened to Malays but not
 to Chinese; the whole policy of Federated and Unfederated Malay
 States was, and is still, pro-Malay. It was surely no wonder that
 the Malayan-born Chinese who, while proud of their Chinese
 ancestry and culture, wished to identify themselves and their

Chinese

China AFI

CONCLUSION

children's future with Malaya alone, were attracted to, or forced into, the Nationalist camp.

Malaya has for long been the 'test case' of Chinese affairs and a focus of interest in Southeast Asia. The situation as it was tending was very clearly described by a distinguished traveller many years ago; Professor Arnold Toynbee records the impression of his visit to the Straits Settlements in these words:

And China is not only enormous already; it is rapidly getting more enormous (if logically that adjective can be put in the comparative degree). When I touched at the Straits Settlements on my way out east I realized that British Malaya is destined, by 'peaceful penetration', to become a Chinese province, and I fancy, from what I have heard, that the same destiny may be in store for Burma, Siam, French Indo-China, Dutch Indonesia, and the Philippines. In the end the current of Chinese expansion in the Tropics will meet the current of Hindu expansion over the submerged heads of the smaller and weaker and less efficient peoples in between, who are already fast going under. And, after what has happened, I surmise that the new frontier between China and India will tend, slowly but surely, to travel westward at India's expense and in China's favour.

What happened in Malaya, we cannot too frequently remind ourselves, was not the result of military conquest, not the territorial spoils of a Kublai Khan, but because the British had welcomed the immigration of a couple of million Chinese. For long after the intervention in the Malay States it had been found difficult to attract the British capital needed for the opening up of the country: it was not until a plentiful supply first of Indian and then of Chinese labour was assured that such capital was forthcoming, and it was not until the end of the 1920s that there was any control at all of Chinese immigration.

The British Colonial Office and the Malayan Governments must have seen that the admission of Chinese in such numbers that they would eventually be the majority community was bound to create a problem of tremendous magnitude. Even the degree of assimilation taking place in Siam and Indochina was out of the question because of the barrier of the Mohammedan religion. The only hope now for the future of Malaya in the interest of its diverse peoples was to promote a feeling of common Malayan citizenship to counter the claim, tacit or express, of Chinese Nationalism to consider Malaya as a new province of China. In the pre-war years

Southeast Asia Agriculture

357

to smallholder systems, leading to the smallholder becoming an exponent of diversified rather than single crop cultivation. 245

While the region has sought to escape the consequence of overmuch dependence on one or two cash crops, Southeast Asia subsistence farming is really already highly diversified. Moreover, the region as a whole must be considered reasonably well diversified in the range of commercial crops it produces, even though individual districts within Southeast Asia are monocultivated rather than polycultivated. 241

EFFECTS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

During the 1941-42 campaign, battles were fought through Burma, Malaya and the Philippines. More military action took place in Burma and the Philippines over the year 1944-45. The direct long-term effects of these campaigns were not emphatic because agriculture and arboriculture cannot be "scorched" and denied to the enemy on a large scale. The war in these territories devastated internal communications, broke down the systems of internal trade, removed the means of communication between different parts of Southeast Asia and destroyed the channels to those overseas markets which had been the principal destination of commercial agricultural produce. Breakdown of external trade channels occurred in all Southeast Asia territories whether campaigns took place in them or not. 241 177 •

The first consequences of this disruption, as distinct from destruction, were to place a premium on subsistence farming, to cause all commercial cultivation to fall into desuetude, to undermine confidence in agriculture for cash, to cause the loss or destruction of draught cattle which were taken away for military use, to disperse labour forces, and to stimulate self-sufficiency policies. Very little of the perennial tree acreage, such as of rubber, was cut down—only 6 per cent in the case of Malayan rubber—yet it was the commercial production which suffered most from disruption, which created in the postwar period considerable difficulties for those territories needing imported rice for the labour to rehabilitate commercial farming and industries. Agriculture itself, where labour was available, rehabilitated quickly; all but 2 per cent of Malayan rice acreages were back in cultivation during 1945-46 and rubber made an equally quick comeback, so

177 358

The Human Geography of Southeast Asia

241 that about one-third of its prewar estate area was being tapped in 1947, representing two-thirds of the area tappable.

439 In the food crops, surplus margins were more slowly restored.
241 Exports of Southeast Asia rice totalled about a million tons during
241 1946, as against a combined export of 5.7 million tons annually
243 for 1936-40. The drop in production of this staple was greatest
177 in the case of Burma because there the dislocation by war had
been greatest, but by the 1946-47 season, about two-thirds of
Lower Burma rice acreages were back in cultivation, as against
half in 1945-46. In Cochinchina over 70 per cent of the rice area
was being cultivated in 1946-47. Siam which was untouched by
military campaigns reported 10.6 million acres under cultivation
in rice for 1946-47 (22 per cent more than 1939-40)—the only
territory to show a substantial increase of rice acreage in the
immediate postwar years.

243 A postwar feature has been the general decline in rice yields,
177 mostly an effect of loss of draught cattle, though to report low
yields was a convenient cover for black market sales. The consequence of lost production in local food was felt more in places like Malaya which has specialised in non-food commercial agriculture, than in any other territories of Asia, which customarily needed to import only a small margin and not the majority of their rice. For the Philippines in 1947, the United Nations reported that *per capita* consumption of rice was actually higher than in 1939 by about 5 per cent.

464 Since labour shortage has been prominent as a factor operating
241 against postwar commercial agriculture, the subsistence farmer
and the diversified smallholder have assumed far greater significance than before. Over 55 per cent of Malaya's rubber production for 1946 was from smallholders, a proportion which had been as much as 85 per cent in the early months of that year, yet fell to 45 per cent in 1950 (cf. 39 per cent in 1940).

249 The vegetable oils soon came back into production and by early 1947 monthly production in Southeast Asia was not far short of 1941 production and now exceeds it.

241 The general lowering of food acreages and of yields, combined
178 with the enforced reversion to subsistence agricultural forms, has a special significance for Southeast Asia food supplies over the next few years, because the restricted food supply comes at a time when population is rapidly increasing, at the rate of about 20

Chapter Twenty-five

PEOPLES, POLITICS AND PROSPECTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

101 THE setting of Southeast Asia may be summed up as one of
184 extremes of relief (deltaic plains and mountains) and a climate
361 mostly approaching the wet limit for plant life but merging into
105 monsoonal types. To this setting the people have made varying
responses, ranging from migrant food gatherers and hunters in the
jungles, to subsistence farmers in the plains, but all turning upon
woody materials for weapons, implements, house-structures and
domestic utensils, upon rice, the cereal of the wet extreme, and
upon social systems of communal help. The whole social and
economic life has been galvanised over the past century or two by
being more and more drawn into commercial and industrial activi-
ties developed in response to and on the basis of external needs for
the minerals and agricultural products of Southeast Asia, whereas
prior to that time the region was touched only by a trickle of
traders moving between India and China.

FACTORS IN THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

174 Several factors account for the difficulty of obtaining firm data
177 to fill in our general picture of the historical geography of South-
311 east Asia. In the first place, there grew up no strong literary tradi-
175 tion to last through the centuries and record the past in a form
other than mythical. Here tradition is largely oral and literature
essentially Indian rather than indigenous. And whatever there was
of local record and history has rotted away quickly, the climate, the
ants, insects and moulds soon destroying anything on wood, paper,
leather or cloth. Moreover, in this setting of swamps and forest, the
most easily available material is wood, and artistic tradition ex-
pressed in wood, whether in carvings, buildings or tools, rapidly
disintegrates, leaving little of that sort of evidence which is the basis
of our facts about early periods in other regions. Buildings and
carvings on stone were not normal expressions of Southeast Asia
people where over large areas stone is not easily come by and where

Peoples, Politics and Prospects

383

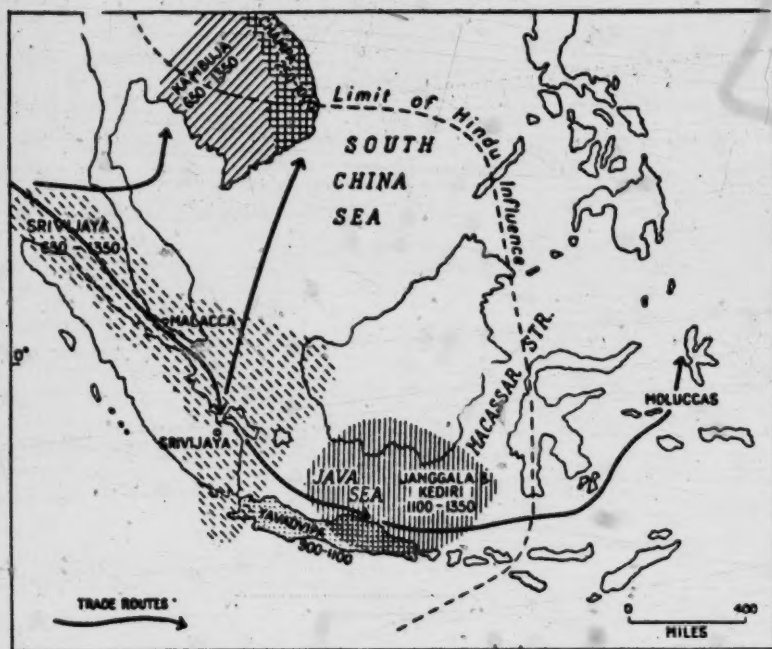


FIG. 113.—Historic Pattern of Southeast Asia during Indian Colonial Period

implements had not in any case developed far enough to deal with stone. Hence monumental evidence in Southeast Asia is so largely Indian, an introduction by foreigners using styles and techniques developed in their home settings, and most developed in the drier parts of this region, where stone is more accessible. On the clay lands, historic brick structures, also an Indian innovation, weather to nothing very quickly. At Angkor may be seen the power of quick-growing tropical trees to shatter and break down temples and palaces built of stone and lateritic blocks.

This, too, is a region of natural calamities, difficult though it is to pin-point them. Little kingdoms have been wiped out in a few hours by Javanese volcanoes, as in A.D. 1006 when the flourishing city of Dharmavamsa (a great king of Central Java) was reduced to ashes by "a great calamity," probably an explosion and lava outflow of the Merapi volcano. Settlements along rivers have been obliterated when huge mud-flows swept down from loose ashes on the flanks of new eruptions, possibly accounting for our ignorance of east Sumatran kingdoms. Coasts have altered through the years

384

The Human Geography of Southeast Asia

133 and deltas have changed; areas which once were shallow sea have
 175 become sedimented to swamps, a process by which Cambodia has
 been cut off as the Lower Mekong built up mud-flats isolating
 Tonle Sap from contact with the sea. The evolution of new routes
 has caused some old centres of power to fade into mere fishing
 villages, evidenced in the decline of Takhola and Bandon after the
 sea route through the Straits of Malacca became more generally

177
 439
 487

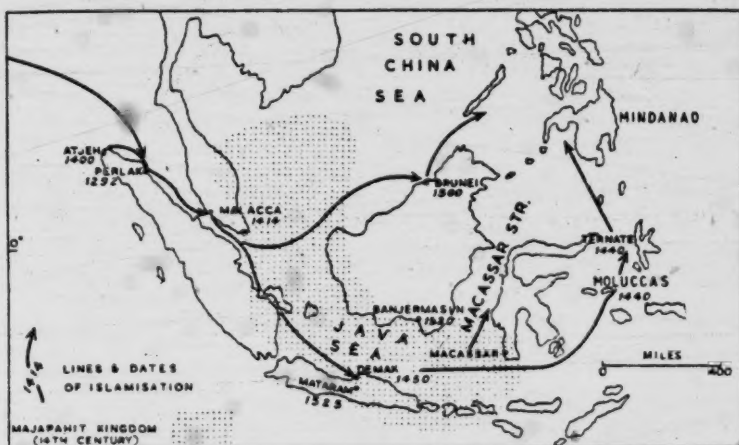


FIG. 114.—Historic Pattern of Southeast Asia at the Islamisation Period

175 used than that across Kra. Plagues have laid waste whole cities, as
 164 when Uthong in about 1350 was devastated by cholera and its
 population fled. The region is still one where malaria, dysentery,
 cholera and plague are endemic, more especially in the older, more
 congested territories like Java. These diseases have frequently
 flared up into appalling epidemics killing thousands of people,
 epidemics reflecting a relation between bacteria and the climate
 (which encourages bacterial reproduction), the population density,
 the difficulties of sewage disposal and social habits of indifference
 to hygiene (which has no ill effects among lonely settlements in the
 forest but becomes a social menace in towns). Fevers and virulent
 diseases have frequently ravaged the local people, debilitated them,
 and wiped out their settlements. The region is strewn with ruins of
 towns now abandoned, and with ruined groups of people who have
 degenerated physically by disease and under-nourishment. South-
 east Asia proved capable of engulfing rather than enshrining those
 moving into it to live.

Peoples, Politics and Prospects

385

Further to complicate the historic geography was the fact that the literary people, the monks and religious men, were Indian or Indian-minded for long periods, disinterested in mundane records, and following the custom, still evident among many Southeast Asia people today, of avoiding personal names, so that anonymity, obscurity and confused nomenclature veil the past even in such records as do exist. Many experiments in writing styles were developed among these isolated and complex peoples and often inscriptions made in them cannot be translated today. Because of the dispersal tendencies within the territories themselves and the lack of focus to the region as a whole, no great depositories of learning were established in Southeast Asia to gather and conserve the record of its past.

174
211
217
175
177 ●

POPULATION CHANGES

Broadly speaking, the region has been until recently one of very thin population and large patches of it still contain populations of remarkably low density. Direct evidence of densities are scanty for periods farther back than this century, yet it seems probable that the whole of Southeast Asia in 1800 contained only about ten million people, when the region was probably as thinly peopled in its most attractive areas as Upper Burma and Upper Siam, the least attractive and developed areas, are today; Malaya then contained about a quarter million people, Java about four million, Burma probably less than two million. It was, even at the end of the 18th century, a zone of labour shortage and the objective of the local princelings of the times was to get hands, the basic power resource of their time, the one way of securing a small surplus from their fundamentally subsistent territories. Outsiders were not greatly attracted to Southeast Asia itself, as apart from the routes through it. To Spain its old colony, the Philippines, was no great asset and more related to Mexico than to Spain, remote and ready to drop from the Spanish orbit during the 19th century. To Holland, its colony in Java was a company venture that yielded little direct profit for many years and was at times on the verge of bankruptcy.

162

But the last 150 years brought tremendous changes in population. First, on the heels of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, came a revival and an expanded volume of trade between the Indian Ocean and the Far East, a stream which threaded the seaways of

178
162

394

The Human Geography of Southeast Asia

000

The dualisms and pluralities of Southeast Asia society are relatively modern, becoming emphatic only over the past three hundred years, but plural societies and changing values within the units have been apparent in their changing political patterns. First there were the inland political nuclei; the kingdoms of Middle Burma, Upper Siam, Inner Cambodia were matched among the islands by principalities set in the mountains of Sumatra and Java. Then came the little powers related more to the sea than to the land; the Sailendra kingdoms using the Malacca Strait as their bond and artery, the Majapahit sea kingdom whose territories in Borneo, Celebes, Java and South Sumatra may be thought of as footholds for a sailing people, fringing rather than entrenched in the islands (Fig. 113). At a later phase the move of power centres was to the lower rivers of the continental edge, to Lower Burma and Lower Siam. In these historic patterns of political units may be seen operating the influences and traditions of widely differing human types, one rooted in the land, coming overland, depending on agriculture for its welfare and power; the other of seafaring people, many kinds and grades of them, coming to the lands of Southeast Asia by water, relatively mobile on their seaways, fishing and trading through the seas, and always peripheral to the land.

DUAL NATIONAL FOCI

369

184

177

631

In most of the constituent political units of Southeast Asia there is thus a split of interest (Fig. 117). Burma has a focus at Mandalay and a commercial-administrative focus at Rangoon; the Philippines has a dual nodality round Manila and round the Visayan Islands; Malaya, which has only recently acquired clear internal focus, has two centres of different interest, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the former exclusively peninsular, the latter as much involved with all Southeast Asia as with Malaya; Indochina has the double pull of the Tonkin (Hanoi) area and the Mekong Delta (Saigon); Java, its old internal focus at Jogjakarta, with Batavia acting as external point of attraction. Sumatra is in the strange position of having several inland nuclei plus the tendency to use Singapore as its out-port and route to Batavia. Only Siam can claim to have no second focus, yet even there the channelling toward Bangkok is only natural for the Chao Praya Basin; the Korat Plateau topography leads human and commercial interests towards the Mekong and the border country towards the northwest was once focused on

Peoples, Politics and Prospects

395

the historic kingdoms at Chiangmai. Borneo is laid out so far entirely under centrifugal influences, complicated by the split into British and Dutch zonations.

If this "balkanisation" be true of the individual political units, it is equally strong in the region as a whole, except that the inter-section of major seaways and airways tends to make an internal regional focus on Singapore, a tendency diminished by India's economic pull on Burma and South China's pull on the people, trade and foods of Siam and Indochina.

To some extent these dual foci to each territory have been stimulated by the arrival of Western trading systems which pulled in one direction while the traditional interests pull in another, yet in a sense all these political units have been created by colonial powers administering as a unit territories not previously politically unified or previously using the present boundaries. Spain and the United States enforced unity upon what is now the Philippines and in practice had continued difficulty in keeping Mindanao, for example, within the unit. France has imposed a uniformity and a certain coherence upon Indochina which was novel to the constituent units. Malaya as it exists today is a British political creation. Before the Dutch colonial period of the present century, all the islands of the East Indies had never been controlled as one whole.

ENVIRONMENT AND STATES

The continental political units, Burma, Siam and Indochina in some ways may be likened to little Egypts—nucleations of people within attractive, fertile valleys protected in these cases by the nearly empty space of forests and mountains. The combination of natural encouragement and natural protection conditioned major civilisations in Egypt and in Mesopotamia at one phase in history and appears to be equally encouraging in this tropical setting except for one difference, that although this environment on the southeastern fringe of Asia certainly suited the growth of states, its protective isolation was incomplete. In the north the growing riverine states were exposed to intruders. Thus in these riverside nurseries, states were environmentally encouraged to grow in a setting attractive as breeding grounds for nations, though the environment was not sufficiently isolating nor sufficiently protective to enable the nascent states to persist. So far as the main islands were concerned, on our maps they appear as more emphatic units

369
184
177
631

369
631
184

THE MEASUREMENT OF WELFARE

417

Enquiry' by Wellenstein, a technique has been developed for turning to the best account such statistics as have any bearing on native welfare.¹

803

Lord Hailey has remarked that in Africa the existing statistics might be considerably improved without additional expense, and that a comparatively small expenditure would make them much more useful. That remark applies also to Burma and probably to most other tropical dependencies. Unsatisfactory as the statistics for Netherlands India are in some respects, they do at least serve to illuminate many corners that are left dark elsewhere, and the general neglect to provide means for judging how far the benevolent aspirations expressed in statements of colonial policy bear fruit in practice, naturally affords a handle for critics of colonial administration to suggest that it is more keenly interested in economic progress than in native welfare. It is not enough that material should be available for measuring individual welfare. The analysis of welfare demands a suitable technique for measuring social welfare by presenting accurate and intelligible information regarding debt, civil litigation, crime, health, education and other matters that find no place in individual budgets of income and expenditure. There would still remain imponderable elements, those cultural and religious aspects of social life in the tropics which are the first to suffer from the economic struggle for survival of the cheapest consequent on the impact of the West. But this is no reason for neglecting to carry so far as possible the objective scientific measurement of welfare.

4. THE MACHINERY OF WELFARE

The deficiency of statistical material is a notable defect in the machinery of welfare. But it is not the only, and not the chief, defect. It may seem that no special machinery is necessary, that the care for welfare may be left to the local official charged with the maintenance of order. That is very largely true. Any European official can tell the people that dirt breeds disease, or explain the benefit of vaccination, or advise them to destroy mosquitoes and rats, or bring to their knowledge new and more profitable crops, or suggest new breeds of cattle, or inculcate the advantages of thrift and the danger of getting entangled with money-lenders. None of the most urgent reforms in the daily life of tropical peoples calls for special scientific equipment beyond the stock of knowledge common to educated Europeans. Natives have frequently

657

654

177

647

¹ Furnivall, *Economic Journal of India*, 1934, p. 295.

657 adopted of their own accord innovations which appeal to them, and it
 654 would seem possible for European officials to recommend European
 standards of hygiene and other reforms with little or no expenditure on
 welfare services. It is true that modern science has done much and can
 177 do more for the welfare of tropical peoples. The connection between
 647 rats and plague and between mosquitoes and malaria are recent
 scientific discoveries, and scientists have traced the origin of hook-
 worm and beri-beri. There is unbounded scope for research, and use-
 ful expenditure on it is limited only by the funds available. But it is
 well to remember that research does not bear fruit until it is applied
 to daily life; its practical application depends on the efficiency of the
 machinery of welfare.

It is true also that administrative officials should be better able to
 promote welfare if they have the assistance of departmental specialists.
 But departmental specialists will usually need the help of administra-
 tive officials if they are to get into touch with the people in their daily
 life. The departmental specialist is probably an expert in his own line,
 but one can hardly expect him also to be expert in native economy and
 customs or to be proficient in native languages. It is useless for the
 medical officer to advocate shoes for hookworm if the people cannot
 afford to buy shoes, or for the sanitary department to devise modern
 latrines which the people will not use, or for the agriculturist to
 recommend crops which local conditions of labour or water supply do
 not allow the people to grow. Although the specialist may try to adapt
 native life to scientific principles, the administrative official should be
 capable of adapting scientific principles to native life. Thus the welfare
 specialist must ordinarily work in double harness with the adminis-
 trative official by his side. But the administrative official can do little
 to promote welfare unless he knows the locality, and what needs
 doing; has influence that will lead the people to attend to his
 advice; and remains among them long enough to make certain that
 they act on it. All these conditions must be fulfilled if welfare work
 is to succeed.

The machinery ordinarily employed differs according as the system
 of rule is direct or indirect. In the adoption of direct rule one
 object was to promote greater welfare through liberating the people
 from arbitrary oppression by their own chieftains. On this plan all
 the administrative officials, European and native, became servants of
 the law, charged with administering equal law to all. When it became
 apparent that the law, while liberating the people from arbitrary will,

THE MACHINERY OF WELFARE

419

subjected them to mechanical economic forces, attempts were made to protect them against the action of these forces. That is the distinctive character of welfare machinery under direct rule; it allows free play within the law to economic forces, but attempts to mitigate their consequences. This is directly contrary to the method of indirect rule, systematized by Van den Bosch in Java, which tries to soften the impact of economic forces by leaving the people under their own chieftains and their own customs, while aiming to protect them against arbitrary oppression. Direct rule attempts to mitigate the action of economic forces; indirect rule aims at providing a buffer against their action. There is a corresponding difference in the machinery of welfare.

(a) *Direct Rule.* It is often suggested or implied that the promotion of welfare in the tropics requires nothing more than the provision of funds for the services of experts. But this view disregards the conditions limiting their activities. The application of science to the affairs of daily life is quite a novel idea even in Europe; each generation of doctors regards its predecessors as unscientific, and in agriculture, hygiene, dietetics and other studies, what is held for true to-day may be out of date to-morrow. But the tropics are still almost virgin lands in science; experience in Europe may be misleading and conclusions based on it invalid. Conditions are different or even contrary. Cultivation requires a cool soil instead of a warm soil; natives apparently maintain good health on a diet that, according to western science, is defective; plague and malaria were spread by measures intended to prevent them. The application of modern science to tropical problems requires long and patient research, and continuity of experiment. But tropical life is adverse to continuity; men go on leave or are transferred for administrative convenience. Lack of continuity nullified experiments on rice cultivation in Malaya, and official transfers hampered the researches of Ross on malaria. Moreover, any single problem may, and often does, require a whole staff of experts for its solution. In agriculture the investigation of a single crop disease may need the collaboration of agricultural experts, botanists, entomologists and so on. The same principle applies in almost all departments of economic and social life. If the agricultural expert, by patient research breeds a more productive variety of some generally grown crop, the people may be unable to take advantage of it because of difficulties in the supply of labour, water or credit; his work raises new problems for a wide circle of other departmental specialists and it will be wasted without their co-operation.

657 It is easy, given the funds, to multiply economic and social services. But the multiplication of service tends to defeat its own ends, and greater expenditure gives worse results through excessive departmentalism. Each specialist looks at life through departmental blinkers. The agriculturist sees nothing but the crops, the veterinary expert only the cattle; to the sanitary inspector the latrine is more important than the home, and the policeman would guarantee security more confidently if the whole population were in jail. Often the experts are at issue. The agriculturist advocates grazing reserves to provide fodder, while the veterinary officer wants to close them to prevent infection; the fishery officer advises the people to breed fish, and the medical officer drains the ponds to kill mosquitoes. Everywhere the specialist inclines to a narrow view of life, but in the tropics departmentalism has peculiar dangers; in Europe the expert looks at a familiar world, but in the tropics, owing to his ignorance of native life, the field is out of focus. In Europe the expert understands the public and the public understands the expert, because they have a common background, but in the tropics it is only the European community in the towns and western enterprise that has a mutual understanding with the expert and values his assistance. Thus the natives in towns prefer to live in the native quarter, where they can escape the unwelcome attentions of the sanitary inspector, 'whose unreasonable prejudice against picturesque filth is never understood';¹ and plantation coolies, on returning home, lapse into their old comfortable ways. Moreover in Europe there is an organic community, living its own life, which can decide for itself what it wants most; but in the tropics, where innovations are pressed on the people from outside, there naturally ensues a lack of co-ordination between the competing and often contrary activities of the departmental specialists; too many cooks, as usual, spoil the broth. The confusion may be mitigated on the Dutch plan by grouping allied services in large departments under a single head. But this device alone is insufficient. What an organic community does by the dynamic force of its inherent vitality must in the tropics be entrusted to some official personifying, as it were, the common social will. There must be someone to co-ordinate the activities of departmental specialists and to foster a demand among the people for their services.

647 Under direct rule the District officer, the local civil servant in charge

¹ Burns, p. 306.

7. THE CONCEPT OF WELFARE

• 177 Between progress and welfare there is a fundamental difference. Economic progress is a matter of universal common sense. It consists essentially in making two blades of grass grow where one grew previously; in widening the margin between yield and cost. Progress is measurable and, if accurately measured, there is little question as to the degree of progress. But welfare is largely a subjective concept; everyone wants different things. Everyone has a different idea of welfare, and it is differently interpreted by successive generations. All colonial powers have claimed in their contemporary idiom a two-fold objective of colonial policy: progress and welfare. On progress there has been general agreement, but in different ages welfare has been identified with salvation, liberty and comfort. The Portuguese and early Dutch both claimed to open the kingdom of heaven to their subjects, but they opened respectively a Roman heaven and a Protestant heaven. The later Dutch and the English both thought to confer freedom on their subjects; but the Dutch allowed them the freedom of their own custom, and the English gave them the freedom of western law. Modern colonial powers aim at promoting comfort, but different ideas of comfort are reflected in Rangoon, Batavia and Saigon. Welfare has been defined as the possibility to satisfy those needs of which one is aware.¹ This definition is not wholly satisfactory, for welfare depends still more closely on those needs of which one is not conscious until they are frustrated, and it is frustration of this type that is largely responsible for unrest among tropical peoples. The definition does, however, suggest that welfare is not wholly subjective; it contains an objective element because it implies a relation between man and his environment. A bullock cart is good enough for those who do not see others ride in motor-cars, but a poor man in a rich country enjoys less welfare than a poor man in a poor country.

Certain things men generally recognize as good. Peace is a good thing. But the nightly drone of planes and the news of battle in the daily papers reminded us that it can be priced too highly. Order and security are good things, but under foreign rule their value as elements of welfare is debatable. In India it was questioned so far back as 1817 by Munro, who was no idealist but a highly competent administrator, able from his own experience to compare the welfare of Indian peoples

¹ Visman, 1, 69.

177

under their own rulers and under the greater security and order enforced by a paternal British Government. The advantages, he wrote, 'are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character and of whatever renders a people respectable....The effect of this state of things is observable in all the British provinces, where the inhabitants are certainly the most abject race in India.'¹ (It should be noted that he was not contrasting the peoples of southern India with what we now regard as the more virile races of the north, at that time not yet under British rule, but with one another.) Gouger about the same time was struck by the difference between the free and easy bearing of the Burmans under their own king and the cringing humility of the peoples of Bengal. A recent traveller contrasts the Annamese with the Chinese and Siamese.² 'I must confess', he says, 'that I like my Orientals free.' There was greater security and order on slave plantations than in Africa, but this was not regarded by the conscience of mankind as sufficiently justifying slavery. Peace, security and order usually promote welfare, but, as may be seen from the *pax Japonica* in Korea, they are not identical with or even a guarantee of welfare.

Economic progress is still often confused with welfare, and it is assumed that because a country produces more the people will be better fed, better clothed and better housed. But, as we have seen already, this belief is contradicted by the facts. More commonly it is suggested that the standard of living can be measured by the demand for European goods, and a rise in imports is taken as an index of welfare, although they may consist largely of production goods for western enterprise. The import of foreign cloth is claimed as an increase of welfare, even when it deprives people of employment, and is perhaps of inferior quality to native cloth. Rather surprisingly, the import of tinned foods is said to be a means of 'strengthening tribal life'.³ Imports of sewing machines, bicycles, gramophones, motor cars and other western products for natives show that some can afford to buy things of which formerly they were unaware, but at the same time make the general public aware of things that they cannot afford to buy. The sewing machine, the bicycle and the petrol engine are probably the greatest boons which modern invention has placed at the disposal of tropical peoples, and an enquiry

¹ Gleig, p. 249.

² Gouger, p. 10; Brodrick, A. H., *Little China* (1942), pp. 157, 172.

³ *African Survey*, p. 690; Mayhew, *Colonial Empire*, p. 82.

177 into their spread and its effects would be of great interest and also of practical importance. But not infrequently such imports merely show that some people have more money than they know how to use; they indicate superfluity rather than welfare among those who buy them, and at best they do not compensate for the decay of social goods that money cannot buy. Even careful attempts to measure welfare in terms of income and expenditure may be misleading, for they omit all those goods that have no price. Probably in Africa, as in Burma, few people are so well fed or so well housed as the prisoners in jail, but the only people who appreciate the comforts of prison life are the warders. If welfare signifies harmony between man and his environment he may be better fed, better clothed and better housed under foreign rule, and still enjoy less welfare than under native rule.

Perhaps we shall obtain a clearer notion of welfare as an object of colonial policy if we try to look at it from the standpoint of the dependent people. Although between individuals in any land there may be a wide range of preference for one thing rather than another, their general idea of welfare conforms to a common pattern which can be seen by looking at what they themselves make of their own social life under favourable circumstances. The ordinary Burman villager, for example, wants to be well fed and well clad according to Burmese ideas, and to live in a dwelling that is comfortable by Burmese standards. These requirements he can satisfy as an individual, but he has other wants, social wants, that he can realize only as a member of the community. He wants his village, also according to his own standards, to have sufficient house room, good roads and paths, a good water supply for men and cattle, adequate sanitary convenience, shady open spaces for social intercourse, and common land for general village amenities in respect of grazing, fuel and so on. High up on his list of social wants is a monastery, with a monastic school and with pagodas and rest houses in pleasant surroundings. He also values opportunities for recreation and for religious and social festivities and entertainments. This may be taken as an outline sketch of the Burmese idea of welfare, which found material expression in the more prosperous villages under Burmese rule, and was probably diffused more widely in the early days of British rule. The Burman wants these things, and he wants, chiefly, to get them to his own liking and in his own way and, beyond that, to have no more to do with Government than necessary. Production is a social function and welfare is a social attribute; in both his work and leisure he is a member of the village and does not live alone.

THE CONCEPT OF WELFARE

439

Such a conception of welfare is quite different from that which ordinarily finds expression in modern welfare legislation. Much of this is based on western models designed to protect labour against capital and, though less effective in the tropics, does something to prevent a reduction in the standard of living in industrial employment below the minimum essential to efficiency. So far as it aims at more than this, it is for the most part unwelcome. The Burman does not want to eat food that Europeans may regard as more nutritious, to observe sanitary precautions that accord with European ideas, or to cultivate his land in ways that Europeans may think more desirable or profitable. His ideas differ in many ways from ours, and where they differ, he is not always mistaken. Native rule in the tropics gives the people more or less what they want, and allows them in great measure to realize their ideas of welfare. But native authority is liable to abuse, and native custom may unconsciously be irksome. So far as foreign rule, by removing abuses and abolishing irksome customs, confers on the people greater freedom to realize their idea of welfare, they accept it more readily. That was what formerly gave strength to British and Dutch colonial rule. As in Lower Burma until about 1880 and in Upper Burma up to about 1910 the people acquiesce in foreign rule because they are hardly conscious of it. It has always been the set policy of Dutch rule to conserve the native social order, however far they may have departed from this principle in practice. The same principle has found expression in some interpretations of indirect rule in British territories,¹ and apparently is still favoured in parts of Africa. If, then, the earlier days of British administration are the happiest, and it is most successful in dealing with primitive and backward peoples, this is probably because the people have been unaware of a change in their environment, except in some ways for the better.

Yet all the time, and even though they do not notice it, the environment is changing. Gradually these changes impinge on native consciousness; the people no longer feel at home, even in their own homes, and increasingly resent foreign rule and foreign ways. For various reasons, humanitarian and practical, colonial powers endeavour to counteract the ill effect of the forces which they have liberated, and to promote native welfare. But this involves closer and more frequent interference with native life and provides fuel for disaffection. In the homogeneous society of the West reforms which raise the individual standard of living tend also to promote social

¹ *African Survey*, p. 134.

177 welfare, and it seems not unreasonable to assume that similar results will follow in the tropics. Schools, sanitary regulations, the improvement of agriculture, and so on, appeal to humanitarians as likely to improve individual welfare, and by making for economy in administration and business, they appeal to reason as well as to sentiment. Naturally colonial governments conceive of welfare on western lines, and administrative practice is concentrated on enhancing the welfare of the people as individuals.

These attempts to promote welfare are effective only so far as the people will respond to them. The West may scatter pearls, or what it takes for pearls, about the tropics, but the people will not pick them up unless they appreciate their value. Scientific agriculture, modern schools, western medicine and sanitary regulations may not conduce to, and frequently conflict with, what the people regard as welfare, but if they cannot get what they want they must take what they can get. Agricultural and other economic services may enable them to earn more as individuals; modern schools may provide their youngsters with 'a decent job'; they may adopt some western foods or remedies for illness, and they may, perhaps, go to hospitals to be cured of their complaints. But these are all individual benefits, and have no relation to welfare as a social good. Welfare consists essentially in harmony between the individual and the environment; the environment must allow him to obtain both what he knows he wants and also what he wants without being a slave of it. Economic progress enlarges the possibility of welfare by increasing the command of man over material resources, but it profits the native as an individual only so far as he participates in the larger surplus, and it enhances his welfare only so far as it contributes, directly or indirectly, to the enrichment of his social life.

8. WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

647 There is, as we have noticed, a growing recognition of the complexity
657 of welfare problems. 'The problems of development touch upon the
654 work of officers in various departments, such as administrative officers,
177 both at headquarters and in the districts, and the technical officers in the
agricultural, veterinary, medical and other services. There is need for
machinery to provide complete co-ordination between these separate
departmental staffs.'¹ The health officer finds that he must seek assistance from the chemist and entomologist, and the veterinary officer

¹ 1940, Cmd. 6175, p. 7; *African Survey*, p. 1612.

WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

441

looks to the forest officer to provide grazing for the stock. As experts come more and more to recognize the need for special knowledge outside their own branch of study, there is an increasing demand for the creation of new services, and welfare work is distributed among departmental officials who are unable to see life as a whole. At the same time there is a growing recognition that all aspects of life are closely interrelated. In Malaya the improvement of paddy is found to require co-ordinated action by the agricultural irrigation, co-operative credit, education and other services.¹ In Nyasaland the Welfare Committee comprises representatives of the Medical, Agricultural and Public Works Department together with non-officials. In Southern Rhodesia there is a Director of Native Development in charge of all native affairs.² The Dutch in Netherlands India minimize sectionalism by grouping the various services in large departments and, further, link up some of the departments by liaison officers. All these expedients may improve the co-ordination of the welfare machinery. But it still remains machinery, and acts mechanically on the people taken in the mass as an aggregate of individuals. Each group of specialists takes snapshots of the people from its own angle, but the composite photograph obtained by fitting the results together bears as little relation to the native world as a Hollywood film to life. It shows native life from an alien western standpoint and, however lifelike, it never comes to life. The more elaborate the machinery, the more mechanically it functions, driven by economic forces and not by human will. Improvements in the administrative machinery merely effect reforms which adapt the people better to the economic forces that dominate life in tropical dependencies. Evolution along this line leads to a dead end. It is the type of evolution characteristic of the lower forms of life which have survived by adapting their way of life to their environment; to adapt his environment to his way of life is the prerogative of man, and reforms adapting him to an uncongenial environment produce not harmony but discontent. The impact of the West has liberated forces which were formerly kept under control by custom; for the enhancement of welfare it is necessary that the people shall be enabled to regain control over these forces, that they shall regain their former autonomy. That a higher standard of welfare is a condition of autonomy is alleged as one ground for the elaboration of welfare machinery. But improvements in welfare machinery resemble improvements in applied science. Research in applied science may increase the efficiency of

¹ Mills, pp. 255, 262.² *African Survey*, pp. 1197, 1227, 1230.647
657
654
177

647 current practice, but the great scientific achievements come from
 657 research in pure science, which revolutionizes practice by attacking
 654 old problems along new lines. Similarly the elaboration of welfare
 177 machinery can have no appreciable effect on welfare, and still less
 can it promote autonomy. It will not give them what they want
 unless they want what it can give, and the promotion of welfare must
 be approached from a new angle by a revolution in method. The
 machinery is not only defective, but is applied on a wrong principle.

But, in the modern world, how is it possible for tropical peoples to get what they want? For the environment has changed, and not the people; they still, if left to themselves, would try to reproduce their old environment. But they have been brought into contact with the modern world and cannot get away from it. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot set the clock back. They can get what they want only if they want what in the conditions of the modern world they *must* want. A fundamental problem of autonomy is to change the people so that they shall come to want, or at least voluntarily to accept, those conditions which the welfare of the modern world requires. Some light should be thrown upon this problem from an examination of attempts already made to introduce self-government among dependent peoples in various projects of colonial autonomy.

9. AUTONOMY

642 Colonial autonomy is closely linked with the Liberal tradition, which had two aspects. On the economic side it stood for economic freedom, freedom of person, property and trade; on the political side it stood for freedom of thought, speech and religion. Political freedom was regarded as the natural fruit of economic freedom. In the nineteenth century Liberalism was in the air. British and Dutch colonial statesmen alike claimed Liberal ideals though interpreting them differently; French Liberals recognized their colonial subjects as citizens of France, and Liberalism in Spain, suppressed at home, took refuge in the Spanish territories overseas.

During a great part of the century Liberals in Britain thought colonies a burden, and often cited Turgot's dictum comparing them to fruit that would fall from the parent tree when ripe. Men looked forward to the day when India should be able to stand alone as the proudest day in the story of British rule. Practical administrators like Sir Thomas Munro argued that when Indians were sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular government for themselves, it would

13. PROGRESS, WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

It would seem then that the machinery of western democracy, like the machinery of western welfare, operates merely to further economic progress. Idealists pleaded the cause of education, but the effective stimulus was the need for educated officials. Humanitarians denounced the conditions of labour, but with little effect until employers came to recognize that more efficient labour was cheaper. Arguments for the employment of natives in the higher ranks of private enterprise found a hearing only when the recent depression necessitated the substitution of natives for Europeans in order to cut down expenses. In India Liberals urged the employment of Indians in Government service, but this came about through the impossibility of entertaining a sufficient staff of Europeans. Liberals advocated also the principle of self-government, but the machinery of self-government was not introduced until there was a need for better sanitation. Reforms have been conceived in a spirit of idealism, but they have had to wait on occasion for the midwife. It is true that humanitarian ideals have done much to accelerate the adoption of reforms by creating a favourable climate of opinion. And they have done more than that; they have encouraged Liberal experiments. It was hope rather than any confidence in their ability that led to the first employment of Burmans as magistrates.¹ Shortage of labour may have encouraged employers to examine the possibility of improving the efficiency of labour, but human sympathy and faith in native potentialities were needed to justify expenditure on providing costly amenities. It was faith in the Javanese that inspired the reforms of Raffles in Java. He believed that they would respond to the desire of gain, and work harder in order to make more money; the Dutch at that time were firmly convinced that they would not work except under compulsion. But Raffles wanted the Javanese to make more money so that they could buy British goods; the Dutch had no manufactures to sell and wanted the Javanese to provide them with tropical produce as cheaply as possible. Projects of enhancing welfare may be inspired by high ideals, but they are conditioned, and therefore frustrated, by economic circumstances. It is of little avail to attempt social reforms without first creating a suitable environment in which they may achieve their purpose.

This principle applies throughout the whole range of colonial policy.

¹ SL, p. 127.

177 So long as Britain looked on India mainly as a market and enjoyed a natural monopoly of tropical markets, British manufacturers and merchants cared little who should govern India, provided that it was governed well and cheaply and set up no barriers to trade; they looked forward to withdrawing from India and could envisage its independence with equanimity. But, with the growth of overseas investments and of capitalist enterprise in the tropics, there were stronger grounds for retaining political control; at the same time Britain lost its natural monopoly of commerce in the tropics, and had to safeguard the political connection in order to fend off foreign powers with a protective policy. Synchronizing with this change in the economic environment there was a corresponding transformation of opinion, a new pride in imperial responsibilities and a new reluctance to sever colonial relations. The goal of policy was no longer independence but responsible government 'within the empire', or 'partnership'. Dutch colonial policy also reflects changes in the economic environment, but in a contrary direction. Under the Culture system and for some years later the Dutch treasury looked to the produce of Java to maintain financial solvency; the Home Government maintained a strict control over colonial administration, and the British policy of training the people for independence was expressly repudiated. But with the development of Java by private enterprise and the growth of its importance as a market, opinion shifted in the direction of autonomy; Batavia wished to shake off the fetters of The Hague. French colonial policy has fluctuated with each change in the balance of power between industry and agriculture. In the United States the strong tradition against imperialism could achieve nothing for Filipino independence until a combination of dairy farmers, Cuban sugar planters and Labour leaders turned it to account for the furtherance of their economic interests. Whatever lofty sentiments may inspire pronouncements on colonial policy, its practical application is coloured and conditioned by interest. But this interest is not often avowed, and is very largely subconscious. It is important therefore, when examining statements on colonial policy, to scrutinize the means designed to give effect to it.

In Britain all parties, with unanimity if with diversity of emphasis, look forward to making the dependencies capable of independence as 'partners' in the Empire. They agree also that economic development is the means by which this end may be attained; the modern constructive policy regards economic development as leading in-

PROGRESS, WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

459

177 •
directly through welfare to self-government. Yet we have seen that economic development is, at best, no guarantee of welfare; also that it makes the people less capable of self-government, increases the difficulty of self-government, and makes the colonial power more reluctant to grant self-government. There is no reason to doubt that the policy is stated with all good faith, and there are plausible arguments for regarding it as sound. Yet general considerations suggest that the means usually advocated would defeat the end proposed. Experience confirms this doubt. Let us examine these matters rather more closely.

Economic development, it is said, is a condition of welfare, and welfare a condition of autonomy, because self-governing institutions cannot be built on a foundation of ignorance and ill-health. We have found, however, that there may be great and rapid economic progress with little or no enhancement of welfare; that economic progress is not a condition of greater welfare but, on the contrary, welfare is a condition of economic progress; and that whereas economic progress is ordinarily a by-product of welfare, it may be, and, unless kept under control, is usually if not invariably prejudicial to welfare. So far then as economic progress fails to enhance welfare, the view that it leads through welfare to self-government cannot be sustained.

But, quite apart from its effect on welfare, economic development hinders the attainment of self-government. Everyone now recognizes that it disintegrates and atomizes native society and, obviously, a crowd of individuals is less capable of self-government than an organic social structure. In regions developed by native enterprise, economic development produces a middle class of landlords and moneylenders, possibly native, often or usually foreign orientals. These, in virtue of their economic strength, tend to acquire political importance. But considerations of welfare, and also of political stability, call for measures to protect the peasantry against debt and the loss of land. Such measures hinder the emergence of a middle class, or tend to eliminate it, leaving nothing between the peasant and the western merchants, a situation that is incompatible with popular self-government. On the other hand, in regions developed by western enterprise, there comes into existence a middle class of petty capitalists, possibly native, often or usually foreign orientals. Considerations of welfare call for measures to protect labour against exploitation. But only western men of business apprehend the advantage of welfare measures and have command over sufficient capital to adopt them, and here again the

• 177 effect of welfare measures is to hinder the emergence of, or to eliminate, the middle class, leaving nothing between the coolie and the representatives of western capital, interested in the dependency solely as a business proposition. Thus economic progress necessitates welfare measures that hinder political advancement. Indeed economic progress makes self-government by the people as a whole impossible, for in place of a whole people it creates a plural society devoid of any common social will and incapable, therefore, of governing itself; in this plural society, moreover, all those sections which are mainly interested in economic progress are in general content that the dependency should be managed as a business proposition, and included among them are some natives, officials and others, who fear to lose the crumbs that fall from the capitalist tables. Economic development creates a plural society not only incapable of self-government, but divided against itself and in part undesirous of self-government.

Again, economic development not only makes a dependency less capable of self-government, but even makes government more difficult. For it builds up above the native world an elaborate superstructure of western economic enterprise in which the people have little or no part; corresponding to this economic superstructure, and as a necessary corollary of its existence, there arises an administrative superstructure wholly foreign to the people, directed and in great part staffed by Europeans. As we have already noticed the administrative machinery finally becomes so elaborate as to be unmanageable, but long before this stage is reached it is beyond popular control. Every new administrative development which does not proceed from the people themselves in response to social will, raises another barrier against self-government. Moreover, the agents of administrative machinery are not merely passive; a steam engine is indifferent whether it enters or leaves its yard, but a horse goes more willingly towards its stable. Similarly officials apply rules in accordance with their inclinations. Under both British and Dutch rule, when officials were converted from mercantile agents into civil servants, it was recognized that, in order to ensure impartial administration, they must be debarred from mercantile transactions. In British dependencies regulations, inherited from the eighteenth century, forbid officials to own land or to engage in trade. This restriction was found essential to uncorrupt administration. But with the growth of joint stock companies it is no longer effective. European officials belong to the same class as men engaged in western enterprise and

PROGRESS, WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

461

177 •

naturally tend to have similar preconceptions. This natural tendency for them to identify themselves with the cause of economic development is strengthened by material interest where they invest in local companies or can look forward to employment by such companies on retirement from official life. Both environment and interest encourage them to look favourably on economic development, and to be suspicious of entrusting the people with powers that may seem prejudicial to economic progress. While co-operating wholeheartedly with measures to increase production or trade by developing material and human resources, they will tend, even unconsciously, to hamper the transfer of control over development to the natives. Friction of this type is not reduced but rather enhanced by the substitution of native officials for Europeans. Europeans, by their tradition and education, are more likely than natives to oppose measures that they regard as unsound, and by their status can do so with less risk to their careers; for similar reasons there would seem to be especial need for the control over investments by native officials. Thus the personnel of the administrative machinery, whether European or native, hinders smooth progress towards self-government. And in any case, the administrative machinery grows so cumbrous in the course of economic progress that all, together with the leviathan that they seem to guide, are carried along by the current of economic forces. With every forward step in economic progress self-government becomes more difficult.

Again, the ordinary course of economic progress extends the circle of people in the colonial power whose interests would seem to be prejudiced if the dependencies had full control over their own affairs. In Britain comparatively few people used to have any great interest in India. Before the Industrial Revolution the profit derived from the Indian connection went mainly to the directors and shareholders in the East India Company, and to the small class that supplied recruits for mercantile, civil and military appointments. After the Industrial Revolution this small class expanded to include the manufacturers of cotton goods, and to those providing capital and labour to the cotton trade or otherwise benefiting directly or indirectly by its prosperity. With the growth of overseas investment and of capitalist enterprise in the tropics, the development of trade stimulated the growth of shipping, and the multiplication of public and private enterprise was profitable to banks and financiers, so that the circle of those interested in maintaining control over dependencies expanded further to include almost

177 everyone in Britain who was engaged in any form of production or commerce. Tropical education opened up lucrative prospects to the great publishing firms, and a variety of welfare measures provided openings for the professional middle class, and encouraged a sympathetic attitude towards colonial relations in universities and other institutions training men for scientific or social activities in the tropics. If England had lost its tropical possessions at the beginning of the nineteenth century, few people would have felt the loss, but now it would threaten the material interest of almost everyone throughout the British Isles.

Colonies, regarded as a business proposition, need capital for their economic development, and can raise funds in the home money market on more favourable terms than some independent powers. But the financial houses which provide the money allow favourable terms on the strength of the imperial connection, and must naturally view with apprehension any change which weakens their security. Manufacturing interests in the colonial power may seem to be threatened if dependencies are enabled to restrict the import of their manufactures, or to foster industries likely to compete with them. During the recent depression, grants under the Colonial Development Act of 1929 made a considerable contribution to employment in this country. Similar conditions will probably recur, and 'if at any time the existence of an unemployment problem requires the examination of providing work in Great Britain, the possibility of further grants to assist African Governments to purchase railway, bridging or other capital equipment might perhaps be considered'.¹ All parties, Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist, are agreed that such assistance should be provided, and all agree that measures are needed to ensure full employment in Great Britain. If dependencies attain independence, it will not be so easy to control them in the interests of Britain or to fit them into comprehensive projects for ensuring employment in this country. Thus we are in much the same position as the Dutch in Java a hundred years ago when the Dutch people as a whole profited by the Culture system. So far as economic development diffuses in the colonial power a material interest in maintaining colonial relations, it must of necessity increase the reluctance of the colonial power to make its colonies capable of independence. Modern colonial policy advocates economic development as a road to the independence of colonies. But if every step along the road to self-government strengthens and

¹ 1940, Cmd. 6928; *African Survey*, p. 1321.

diffuses those interests in the colonial power which self-government imperils, makes self-government more difficult and dependencies less capable of self-government, there would seem good reason to ask whether it is the right road. 177 ●

Experience supplies the answer to this question. In few British dependencies, if any, has there been such vast and rapid economic progress as in Malaya during the first quarter of the present century. If economic development leads to self-government, no dependency should be more capable of independence. In the Federated Malay States, however, it has created a plural society in which the natives contribute only 26 % to the general population, and there is no dependency where self-government presents more difficult problems. In Netherlands India economic progress up to 1930 was even more conspicuous. The Government had not disregarded native welfare and, especially from 1900 under Ethical inspiration, it had been zealous in benevolent activities. But the country was run on business principles as a business concern, and it was the huge scale of the western superstructure that made the depression of the thirties so disastrous. For the collapse of the whole edifice seemed imminent, and capital had to seek the aid of Government; it was no longer a master but a mendicant. The Government took this opportunity to impose restrictions on capitalist activities in accordance with a policy of directing economic development in the interest of Netherlands India as a nation. Dutch writers claim that the ten years before the Japanese attack witnessed the 'birth of a nation' in Netherlands India, not merely an alliance of local peoples, creeds and castes agreeing only in a sectional opposition to foreign ways and foreign rule, but the amalgamation of all the distinct constituent elements of a plural society into one society with a common social will. History will test this claim, but the point immediately relevant is that the transformation was effected not by 'injections of western capital', but by restricting capitalist activities in the interest of a common nation.

In other dependencies various new developments during the recent war point in a similar direction:

'In all colonies the restrictions on imports have stimulated the growth of local industries both for making household and other articles of common use and for the processing of local produce. In West and East Africa, for example, among the articles now being made in addition to food products are the following: rope and twine, starch, shingles and tiles for roofing, shoe-leather and shoes, boot polish. These industries have been part of a

177 temporary war time plan to supply local needs as far as possible from local resources.¹

In many or most of these new ventures western enterprise has taken a leading part. For the time being, and under the pressure of economic circumstances, capitalists have been transfigured as nationalists. But so far as these enterprises are run by western capitalists, it is doubtful how long they will survive the circumstances to which they owe their birth. During the war of 1914-18 there was a similar expansion of local industry in Netherlands India, but when communications with Europe were restored, western enterprise found other activities more profitable and local industries collapsed.

There is a greater chance for the survival of local industries when they are in native hands. In the Tropical Far East the recent depression which stimulated western enterprise to develop local industries also provided new opportunities for native enterprise. In Burma, for instance, as in Netherlands India, high taxation on matches impelled the natives to manufacture cheap cigarette lighters.² The encouragement of native manufactures was an outstanding feature of economic policy in Netherlands India during this period.³ Between 1930 and 1940 the number of modern handlooms rose from 500 to 49,000, and of mechanical looms from 40 to 9800; the import of cotton thread for weaving rose from 3000 to 28,000 tons and created a spinning industry. By 1936 the local production of *sarongs* had risen to 5.6 million kgs. and imports had fallen to 2.35 million and by 1940 to 0.33 million. The import of caustic soda for soap manufacture rose from 4000 tons in 1930 to 18,000 tons in 1940. The manufacture of native cigarettes and of native straw hats showed similar progress. And a native bank came into existence to finance the various native enterprises. After the war such purely native industries have a much better prospect of survival than local industries in the hands of European capitalists who will find other forms of enterprise more profitable. Moreover, any tendency to restore the conditions that existed before

¹ *Mass Education*, p. 48.

² The sequel is of some general interest. In both countries the finance department urged that the manufacture of lighters should be prohibited in order to safeguard the revenue from matches. In Netherlands India the Government, though not responsible to the people, resisted the proposal on the ground that in the current depression anything which gave employment was beneficial. In Burma, with nominally a much greater measure of self-government, the proposal was accepted, and the enterprising and ingenious Burman manufacturers of lighters were subjected to heavy penalties by Burman magistrates.

³ Sitsen, pp. 19, 20n., 47; Mitchell, pp. 197ff.

PROGRESS, WELFARE AND AUTONOMY

465

1930 will encounter formidable resistance because economic power implies political power. 177 •

In Netherlands India, then, recent economic circumstances, by imposing restrictions on economic progress, have favoured national solidarity, the enhancement of welfare and economic development on a broader basis, and therefore, in the long run, greater progress. In the first throes of the depression the vision of impatient idealists seemed to be eclipsed. But reality lay below the surface, and even men of shorter vision 'learned that ideals should find their place in practical policy'.¹ As so often in colonial history, humanitarian ideals proved plain common sense. The lesson taught by Netherlands India is reinforced by the course of affairs in China and Russia. Forty years ago European powers were greedily expecting the 'break-up of China' to provide new opportunities for western capital. Twenty years ago Russia seemed to have collapsed. But China and Russia have been restored to greater vigour, not by the medicaments of capital, but by the vivifying tonic of a new idea. The plural society of tropical dependencies is dominated by economic forces, and, as recognized by the Statutory Commission, foreign rule is impotent to counter social and economic evils. Only some force transcending the economic sphere can bring them under control. Christians, Buddhists, Moslems and Hindus accept the principles of their religion as of greater validity than economic forces, but, in religious allegiance as in other matters, the plural society is divided, and there is no principle of social life, transcending merely economic considerations, that all will accept as valid except the principle of nationalism. In Europe at the present time the principle of nationalism is suspect. Men see in it a force stronger than self-interest, but for the same reason they fear it, and seek an alternative in a vague and ineffectual humanitarianism based on Christian tradition but disclaiming Christian doctrine. We may readily grant that 'patriotism is not enough', but one need not reject patriotism in order to rise above it. Economic forces operate everywhere alike, but social and political conditions in the tropics are directly contrary to those prevailing in homogeneous western lands, and in almost all matters it is necessary to apply contrary remedies to get the same results. That is especially true of nationalism as a principle of action. In the West we assume without question that 'defence is more than opulence', and that the individual should subordinate his personal interests to the common weal. In tropical

¹ Hart, p. 54.

• 177 dependencies the conception of a commonwealth has been destroyed, and only an explicit acceptance of the principle of nationalism can restore it; only by aiming directly to make them capable of independence can we enhance welfare and lay secure foundations for economic progress.

14. THE PROBLEM OF AUTONOMY

If, then, we are to aim at making dependencies capable of independence, how should we set about it? Experience shows that it is futile to proclaim ideals without creating the conditions which make them practicable. If we would make dependencies capable of independence, we must first achieve those conditions which make it possible. The problem of conferring autonomy on a tropical dependency is not merely a problem of mechanical contrivance, of ingeniously constructing political machinery that can be worked by natives, or despite native opposition; it is a problem of creative will. In the colonial power there must be an impulse to create a tropical society capable of political autonomy, and in the dependency a society capable of responding to this impulse, a society with a common social will that accepts the conditions of the modern world. This is so obvious that it would not be worth saying if its implications were not so generally disregarded.

Self-government implies the existence of a common social will, and a colonial power which aims at making its dependencies self-governing must aim directly at promoting a common social will, and must foster the social, economic and political reintegration of the whole community which economic development disintegrates. Further, self-government in the modern world requires the acceptance of the conditions of the modern world, and implies therefore a process of social education so that the common social will shall be informed with those principles on which modern western civilization is founded. The transformation of the environment through the reintegration of the plural society and through social education represents one aspect of the problem.

But the problem has another aspect. In the colonial power the creative impulse is weakened by considerations of national prestige, and by the economic motive which tempts all to pursue their immediate and obvious economic advantage, and by the rational appeal which economic efficiency makes to universal common sense. We find a law that when we would do good, evil is present with us, and may exclaim,

THE PROBLEM OF AUTONOMY

467

177 ●

with the apostle, the good that we would we do not: but the evil which we would not, that we do. It is very easy to deceive ourselves, and we have observed that each generation of colonial reformers is apt to accuse its predecessors of hypocrisy. Clearly then, if we aim at making dependencies capable of independence, we must take such measures as are possible to strengthen our good intentions by creating such an environment as is most likely to fortify our will.

Thus the problem of autonomy has two distinct aspects which we consider separately in the following chapters.

175 was suggested by Furnivall as a cause of the foundation of
439 Indian trading centers at convenient sites along the coasts
648 and main rivers of Southeast Asia. The same author places
the date of the first Indian colonization in the area at about
150 A.D.⁸ Harrison, however, maintains that the first definite
Indian settlements were established in the first century A.D.⁹

175 Indian settlements were typically colonial in the
• 177 old sense of foreign settlement without foreign rule. The-
563 settlers came as traders, intermarried with the local people,
648 acquired wealth, and formed an aristocracy. Then, as new
migration ceased, the Indian rulers and aristocracy were
absorbed into the people. In the inscriptions, the language
and written characters took on native forms, and the names
of persons and places were no longer Indian but native.
Similarly, in the religious monuments and other buildings
a native style was superimposed on the earlier Indian models.

175 Most authors have credited these Indian settlers
177 with having brought Indian culture to Southeast Asia. Harrison,
648 for example, takes for granted that "Indians who voyaged
overseas to Southeast Asia naturally brought with them the
ideas and practices of Hinduism and Buddhism."¹⁰ He further
speculates that "traders, adventurers and craftsmen were
followed by Brahman and Buddhist priests and teachers,

8. Ibid., p. 127.

9. Brian Harrison, South-east Asia (London: Macmillan &
Co., Ltd., 1954), p. 10.

10. Ibid., p. 12.

175 carrying the civilizing influence of Indian cultural and
• 177 spiritual life and implanting it in these new lands by
648 introducing the art of writing and the classical Sanskrit
language and literature; bringing as well their own vernacu-
lar languages to enrich the vocabularies of Southeast Asia.¹¹

175 It may be argued, nevertheless, that since there is little
177 good evidence for any large Indian emigration to Southeast
439 Asia, much Indian culture could have been brought back by
648 cosmopolitanized Southeast Asian traders who often spent
months in India waiting for the monsoons to change their
direction.¹² It should be noted in this connection that
during this time of early Indian colonization trade rela-
tions were also extended westward by Indonesians (who earlier
reached Madagascar) and other Southeast Asians.

175 During the expansion of Islam, from 1350 to 1500,
648 Moslem colonization followed the Indian pattern. Thus we
may say that formerly a colony was merely a settlement in
a foreign land and the settler had little or no political
[797] connection with the home land. The Indian and Moslem became
foreign rulers, but they did not establish foreign rule.
Subsequently, the Portuguese and Spaniards came as royal
agents and with a warrant from the Pope to undertake both
175 the conquest and conversion of the people. The old idea
648 of a colony as a settlement survived: there were grandees
563

11. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

12. The author is indebted to Professor Lauriston Sharp
for the development of this idea.

175 with large estates, permanent immigrants of lower rank who
648 married native women, and priests spending a lifetime in
569 their parishes. But the colonies were ruled by Governors
from Europe. They were both settlers and rulers. The Dutch
came merely as traders, but they could obtain tropical pro-
duce only in the form of tribute; economic circumstances
required them to accept sovereignty on behalf of the home
company and to rule the people indirectly through native
chieftains, and also to settle permanently, though on a
comparatively small scale, to supervise native cultivation.
They were primarily rulers and were settlers only by force
of circumstance. In the 19th century the English carried
the process a stage further. Through the industrial revolu-
tion they had goods to sell, and the object of their policy
was not tribute but trade. This required direct rule, but
not settlement, except in the ports. Finally, with the
growth of capitalism and the opening of the Suez Canal, the
typical system of colonial development was by foreign capital
with European management and imported Asian labor. Thus
there was a process of development from the old colonial
system of foreign settlement without foreign rule to a new
system of foreign rule without settlement.¹³

175 Impact of the Changing Trend of Trade with the West

177 In the nineteenth century, the age-old means of com-
648 munication between the different parts of Southeast Asia

13. Furnivall, op. cit.

175

177

648

were revolutionized by the techniques and aims of the West.

175

177

648

439

505

After 1850, European-owned steamships began the gradual process of taking over the bulk of the inter-port trade from native sailing boats and Chinese junks. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made possible the great modern expansion of Western rule and trade, and thereby brought about the economic and social revolution which has created the Southeast Asia of today. The year 1870 is the real dividing-line between medieval and modern in the history of Southeast Asia.¹⁴

175

177

433

439

648

Whereas during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries the various European nations active in Southeast Asia had, on the whole, limited themselves to trading and acquisition of high-priced nonbulky commodities, such as spices, the economic policy of the nineteenth century called for large quantities of bulky goods, such as sugar, fibers, oil seeds, coffee, and copra. Since the peasantry of Southeast Asia, almost without exception, raised only subsistence crops and had only limited surplus, it became necessary for the colonial powers to increase agricultural production. This was done in two ways: through the application of pressure on the peasantry to produce for export, and through the development of large-scale plantation agriculture.¹⁵ The shift of emphasis from trade to production

14. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

15. Karl J. Felzer, "The Resource Pattern of Southeast Asia," *Southeast Asia in the World Today*, ed. Phillips Talbot. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 109.

175 thus set a new stage -- the development of the natural

• 177 resources of the whole region.

433

439

648

This change-over from a subsistence economy to a commercial economy involved the large-scale expansion of traditional crops or the development of new commercial crops.

[436]

[437]

[61]

It was stimulated by the introduction or expansion of a money economy, the flow of capital and the development of land and sea transport. It was supported by Western technology, methods of administration and systems of justice. This whole process greatly affected the traditional institution, up-

175

177

[59]

[423]

[426]

[566]

setting the balance of a medieval world. The free, individualist spirit of Western rule and commerce cut at the roots of traditional social life, undermining the corporate strength of family and village. But the most serious direct threat of the new economic forces was to the peasant's ownership of land. Expanding economies, new money taxes and cheap imports meant better business than ever for the money lender. Many peasants became ruined by debt and lost their lands. Indebtedness and debt slavery were not new in Southeast Asia; the latter was fairly soon stamped out, but the former now became much more widespread than before, resulting in the creation of a landless proletariat.¹⁶

184

Characteristics of Current Southeast Asian Economy

In spite of all the differences among the countries of Southeast Asia in the natural environment, ethnic

16. Harrison, op. cit., p. 210.

PREFACE¹

IMPERIALISM, IN THE FORM of the government of weaker peoples by the peoples of the West, was an element in the explosion which rent an explosive world economy. Western society had failed to control its own inventions. The palliative of geographical expansion had produced a struggle for trade and raw materials which at a late date led to Western rule. Through this expansion the world was ringed by a powder train leading from and back to the Western countries.

There is now a recession of this form of imperialism. In the strength of its industrial revolution, Western Europe had gained the economic and political control of much of the world and of its products. To some extent, it had won spiritual control. The system which seemed nearly all-powerful was nearly all-desirable; and the West, out of the abundance of its adventurers and its adventures, produced men of outstanding character and ideas and inventions of outstanding value. Now in Southeast Asia the tide has turned. As the *London Times* reported in 1942, the fall of Singapore was something "more than the evacuation of a city; it was the end of an epoch."

Long-term factors, such as the spread of industrial techniques to other civilizations, the decline of the Western birth-rate and the very success with which some of the most valid Western conceptions had been received, together with immediate circumstances, such as the failure of Europe and of America to protect their interests, the success, short-lived though it was, of an Asiatic power and the rapidity of the Japanese surrender, make impossible a return to pre-1942 conditions and assure the determined resistance of Southeast Asia to any reimposition of former colonial rule.

Account needs also to be taken of other features in the change. Western Europe resents the criticisms directed against her past record. Western Europe reached a high stage of civilization, has suffered grievously, and can claim that its contribution to world progress has been considerable and includes many achievements in its colonial policies. There is indeed something of a Greek tragedy in the decline of power due to the fulfilment of the Western destiny as the awakener of aspirations inherent in Western thought. The results are a sensitiveness which cannot stomach ill-considered condemnations of "colonial exploitation" and a determination to resist criticism by counter-criticism and force by counter-force. Secondly, if a vacuum of political anarchy comes about in any

¹ The views expressed in this preface are those of the writer alone.

177 part of Southeast Asia for even short periods, new forces may fill it, while avoiding the responsibilities of government provided by the colonial system. The new or re-established nations cannot avoid contact with the old and the new forces. The tools, the experience and perhaps the doctrines they need are to be found abroad, for the vast increase in their peoples has added to the problem of poverty so that it can only be solved by the increasing use of perfected forms of production in agriculture and in industry.

177 648 The independence of the Philippine Republic, the preparations for independence in Indonesia, the recognition of Viet Nam, the constitutional progress of Burma, thus not only mark a local epoch; they are of world-wide significance. In many cases, they represent a change of national policies. Internationally, in Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, countries responsible for the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories have undertaken "to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions." Events in Southeast Asia and the course of discussions at the General Assembly of the United Nations suggest that the general principles of Chapter XI cannot be relegated to the future as pious aspirations. For good or for insufficient reasons, the pattern of past colonial rule has been broken, and the trend of world policy presupposes the relaxation of the political controls established by the Western powers in Southeast Asia and the rapid emergence of new sovereign states.

Even so, the basic problem of Southeast Asia in relation to world affairs is not the passing of the colonial stage of government. It is the broader problem of the evolution towards self-reliance of communities which in the past were largely controlled by outside forces in their economic and social, as well as in their political life, and which at present must seek some adjustment with these and other world forces. The political aspects of the problem are narrowing. They mainly relate to the detailed questions of when, where and how political autonomy will be established. On the other hand, Southeast Asia may long remain under foreign domination in matters of economic and social policy, with the danger that indirect control will be established without responsibility and that the next center of world rivalries will be found in the region.

The countries of Southeast Asia will be unable to play their part in the peace and prosperity of the world without drastic improvements in the economic and social life of their peoples. Poverty, unbalanced economic development, ill health, ignorance, labor difficulties and the exploitation of the weak by the strong, which were problems during the period of European control, will not be abolished by the abolition of such control. The change is that the countries will need economic and social assistance which can aid their political evolution.

Chinese
Indians

LABOR SUPPLY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA 3

religion was no barrier between themselves and the Chinese; all were Buddhists, though of differing sects. Chinese culture had long been admired by the peoples of Farther India, and had influenced them. Moreover, the Chinese were regarded as distant and desirable relatives. With the advent, however, of Chinese women and the accelerated growth of Chinese nationalism after the first world war, intermarriage occurred less frequently (though it continued to be common in Burma and Cambodia), and the indigenous peoples had few social contacts with the Chinese in their midst. The cleavage between the ethnic groups was further widened in the British colonies by the official policy of representation of various communities on legislative and advisory bodies.

Economically, relations between the indigenous and the immigrant peoples altered from a mosaic of non-conflicting occupations to one of rapidly increasing competition. For years the native peoples had contentedly seen the arrival of thousands of immigrants annually who were able and willing to perform the hard labor for which they themselves had neither inclination nor compulsion. Through much of the region, however, during the inter-war period an indigenous proletariat was developing as a result of the transfer of farm land from the indebted native peasantry to non-agriculturists, often to alien moneylenders, and also because of the growth of a Western-inspired individualism which was weakening family ties once paramount. The trend was apparent chiefly in parts of Burma, Siam, and Indochina.

This development did not assume significant proportions until the world economic depression, when considerable unemployment arose out of the drop in prices and the curtailment of foreign markets for products of Southeast Asia. The result was a swift increase in the number of natives seeking to return to their villages and, on the other hand, of those forced to seek part-time or full-time employment away from their villages in competition with immigrant laborers for work previously scorned as arduous, monotonous, and underpaid.

Meanwhile the native middle classes for the first time faced a serious unemployment problem. Until the depression years, the opportunities for desirable though moderately paid employment in government or business had seemed to exceed the number of qualified candidates. The depression made it clear that the saturation point had been reached, and each year an increasing number of educated youths would be thwarted in their expectation of employment or, if given a job, in their rise to higher positions. Thus two groups of economically frustrated natives developed simultaneously in numbers and in consciousness in the decade prior to the second world war.

Nascent political factors became significant during that period. The struggles of the Chinese against the Japanese and of Indians against British rule were reflected in the attitudes of the emigrants from those coun-

563
609464
477
178[425]
[177] ●464
458
178464
178563
464
668

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

Suez Canal in 1869, and the consolidation of Western control, direct or indirect, over most of Southeast Asia in the 1890's, followed by American acquisition of the Philippines at the turn of the century.

More important, the great cities were, and to a large degree still are, foreign creations, essentially alien to the Southeast Asian landscape. Although several began as native settlements, they developed as foreign exclaves on the margins of Asia, in much the same way as did the plantation system and mining operations. With the exception of Bangkok, they represented and functioned as the overseas appendages of Western, not indigenous, interests, being what Spate has called "head-links"—the gates by which Western concepts entered to destroy and build and in which a new system of economic organization evolved.¹³ Indeed, the concept of the Asian plural society was inspired by the contrast between the basically foreign great city and the indigenous agricultural village. The ties of the great city with its hinterland were primarily commercial and associated with foreign-controlled mining and plantation interests and with Chinese-dominated rice trade. Such direct political-administrative ties as did exist were restricted primarily to indigenous elites, small in number, which allied themselves with Western interests. Where the indigenous rural populations were affected by these urban-rural relations, it was primarily through the plantation or the mining system, both of which needed a large labor force, or through Indian or Chinese intermediaries.

On the other hand, the relations between an indigenous capital, like Bangkok in its earlier period, or Kyoto or Peking, and the agrarian society upon which it was based were of quite a different order. In these cases the capital represented the culmination of what might be termed a national *ethos*, the epitome of what Redfield has

¹³ O. H. K. Spate, "Factors in the Development of Capital Cities," *Geographical Review*, October 1942, p. 628.

184 try, indigenous, cultural or political sub-
 369 center. Just as Shanghai had its Nanking
 361 and Peking, so Rangoon has its Mandalay,
 Jakarta its Jogjakarta, Manila its Cebu,
 and, in a variant form, Singapore its Kuala
 Lumpur.

• 177 In the past these cities sited along the
 184 Asian littoral have been the funnels through
 369 which produce from the interiors have
 361 reached tidewater and the world of com-
 merce and Western manufactures have pen-
 etrated. Through the increasingly metro-
 politan channels have flowed the ideas of the
 West as well as its material goods. In a sense
 they have acted both as a catalyst for social
 and economic change and as a cushion which
 modified the shock of the earlier cultural
 contacts.

361 With the exception of Singapore, the site
 of each of the great cities of Southeast Asia
 is an ill-drained riverine or coastal lowland
 strategically placed in relation to an excep-
 tionally productive agricultural region.

[504] Again, with the exception of Singapore, none
 possesses a deep natural harbor suitable for
 modern ocean-going shipping. The three
 mainland ports are both river and ocean
 ports and must be reached through tortuous
 and shallow river channels. All are entre-
 pôts. Jakarta and Manila are located on the
 most highly developed islands of the archi-
 pelagoes, for which they act as entrepôts.
 Only in Indonesia and Indochina are there
 major competitors for the two greatest ports
 —Haiphong, the outlet for the densely pop-
 ulated Tonkin delta, and Surabaya, the re-
 gional capital for the Great East of the In-
 dies, itself an empire. Each great port vir-
 tually dominates the national import trade;
 all tend, however, to share some part of the
 national export trade with lesser ports. In
 spite of these great similarities, the nature
 and functions of the ports differ markedly.
 As Allen observes: "All ports are individual.
 History, geography, politics, and economics
 all contribute to making them as they are.
 Few universal principles apply, and at-
 tempts to force uniformity on ports which
 have grown up differently are bound to
 fail."¹⁸ Singapore, for example, is one of the

361 behind them is one of the most striking
 34 demonstrations of cultural dualism in South-
 184 east Asia.

Unlike the other great cities, Bangkok
 175 originated as the capital of a land-oriented
 361 agrarian state. Its proximity to tidewater
 504 was accidental. In 1822 the ship bearing the
 Crawford mission to the Thai court barely
 • 177 was able to cross the bar at the mouth of the
 178 Menam, then covered by only four feet of
 water.²² Its poor harbor and its remoteness
 from the major shipping routes of the South
 China Sea conspired to retard the develop-
 ment of the city as a port until the end of the
 nineteenth century and to retain it as an
 anachronism in Southeast Asia—a growing
 city, nearly great, surely primate, but indig-
 enous rather than Western. Nevertheless,
 since it was through Bangkok that Western
 influences filtered into Thailand, it is a case
 of an indigenous capital acting as a revolu-
 tionary medium for socioeconomic change.

504 Bangkok is still the least convenient port
 361 of the great cities in Southeast Asia. The bar
 across the mouth of the Chao Phya was
 dredged through only in 1952, and port
 facilities are modest as compared with the
 other cities. Indeed, most vessels still anchor
 in the Bight of Bangkok in the lee of the
 island, Kao Hsi Kang, at the mouth of the
 Chao Phya and transship their cargoes to
 and from river barges and country boats
 which link the island with Bangkok. Sur-
 prisingly, the freight tonnage handled at
 Bangkok is about one-third that of Singa-
 pore, although the volume of shipping is
 only one-tenth as large. The explanation lies
 partly in the large bulk shipments of rice
 which form the main export. Partly, also,
 there is a lower load factor at Singapore,
 since much of the shipping which enters its
 harbor is as much dependent on the local
 complex of service facilities as on cargo po-
 tential. At Bangkok, peripheral as it is to the
 main trade routes, few vessels call without
 assurances of sizable cargoes.

²² See J. Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China* (London: H. Colburn & R. Bentley, 1830).

On the other hand, changes in transportation have elevated Bangkok to a new importance. It lies astride the main air route between Europe and the Far East, and the Australia-Europe services also pass through it. It is now the leading international air center in Southeast Asia, with 42 international departures a week in 1953 as compared with Singapore's 27, and its airport is one of the larger commercial fields in the Orient.

The role of the Southeast Asian great city has been modified by the Pacific war and the granting of independence to Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia, and partial independence to Vietnam. Five of the six great cities are now capitals of the independent states. Each of these merits the title "link capital"; that is, they are the media through which the newly independent states are linked with the outside world. At the same time, they have begun to assume an increasingly indigenous character. The substitution of Malay for Dutch names and street signs in Indonesia is only one evidence of cultural change. The in-migration of petty officials, tradesmen, and refugees from the beleaguered rural areas has given the urban populations a new and more homogeneous native cast. The fevers of nationalism have made the large minorities more cautious about flaunting their ethnic independence.

! [i.e. as compared to the inconvenient port facilities -- Analyst]

361
508
369

361
178
184
162
563
177
631
369

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

- 361 On the other hand, the war also brought in-
178 creased American influence into the region,
631 and the ubiquitous Coca-Cola sign is one of
184 the symbols of change that sooner or later
162 will be followed by changes in urban facili-
563 ties and urban organization.
• 171 More important, the present period is as-
369 sociated with an increasing intensification of
the economic activities of government and a
corresponding diminution of foreign enter-
prise. Political and administrative functions
have become increasingly important since
the war. Since the main governmental or-
gans are concentrated in the largest centers,
the direct influence of the great city upon
the country in which it is primate is likewise
increasing. Relations between nationalized
city and an increasingly money-oriented
countryside are becoming more intimate,
and the formerly clear-cut cultural distinc-
tiveness of city and country is rapidly be-
coming blurred. Therefore, the likelihood of
the great city's leading a revival of ancient
value systems, as some extreme ethnocen-
trists hope it will, is small. Only one predic-
tion can be made: the days of the culturally
alien and ethnically distinct urban center
are numbered in Southeast Asia; and a city
like Singapore becomes increasingly an
anomalous relict of an age now past.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1950]

THE PEASANTRY OF SOUTH EAST ASIA

507

for his wife—but he is equally likely to put it into a piece of equipment or to hire some land. To understand the position of the peasant one must realize the structure of the economic system of which he is a part, and the values of his social system. 433 565 461

The peasant economy must not be thought of as simply a subsistence economy. It has a complex marketing structure which, even apart from Western influences, had an elaborate series of middlemen for making possible the diffusion of cloth, salt, iron, dried fish, spices, and other goods. The system of exchange has been intensified, and the reactions of different types of producers made more sensitive by the influence of the West. On the one side are the Western markets for primary products—coffee, spices, tobacco, copra, kapok, and, above all, rubber—the quick response to which has demonstrated how alive the Asiatic peasant is to making money if the opportunity offers. On the other side are the Western types of consumer goods, novel, attractively presented, easy to use—ranging from lamp oil, imported cigarettes, and cornflour for babies, to electric torches, bicycles, and the cinema. Conservative in his techniques of production, the peasant has shown himself enterprising in his consumption. The result has been that at many points, almost without realizing it, the peasant has become geared to the Western economic system. In the early days of European contact, he had often to be pushed as well as tempted into producing for the Western market. The scathing book, *Max Havelaar*, by the author calling himself 'Multatuli'—later known to be Douwes Dekker—has shown the kind of abuses that resulted from pushing the peasant into an enforced relation to the Western market. But naturally many of these links have been of his own seeking. In the last resort, it is the peasant's own scheme of values, his degree of acceptance of the goods and services which the West offers and which he transmutes to some extent in receiving, which determines his economic destiny. 433 565 439 177

But for the most part, the peasant has been incapable of perceiving the processes at work. The field is too vast for his comprehension. His reactions to the crisis and depression of the nineteen-thirties were direct and rational as they came under his personal observation. When prices fell he increased production of the export crops to maintain his cash returns; when that failed he retired from the struggle to utilize his backlog of subsistence cropping. But like many a farmer elsewhere, he had not understood much more than the immediate market situation. The pressure of the West has provided the peasant with a new range of wants from which he cannot rid himself even should he wish, and markets for his labour and raw materials which are an inducement to him to modify his habits. A new administrative system has given him fresh legal framework for many of his acts. A new system of taxation, though often lighter than before, is more methodical in its pursuit of defaulters. His land, the foundation of his existence, has for the most part been preserved to him, and indeed the security for his legal title to it has been much improved. But alien planta- 000 [527]

508

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

[OCT.

427 But the alien planta-

565 tions and even alien smallholders have threatened to grasp at it, and the
177 advances of Western medicine, so beneficial in many ways, have only
accelerated the rate of increase of the population which has to seek a
livelihood from it. In most parts of South East Asia the peasant is the
actual owner of the land he tills, often legally under some agreement with
426 the State. But his rights to the produce are often severely limited by a
heavy burden of indebtedness. The real effects of this may be less than
people sometimes think, because when the debts are spread among neigh-
bours and kinsfolk interest may be waived, repayment is sometimes pro-
tracted or ignored, and the debt may be serviced by other than material
means. But there is no doubt that the peasant producer is badly hampered
by his debt load. It is most pressing when debt is contracted to a member
of an alien ethnic group, an Indian or a Chinese, for whom the transaction
is a purely commercial one.

563 The role of alien Asiatic ethnic groups is one of the most significant
565 features in the economic and political life of the peasantry of South East
177 Asia today. For many centuries, Indian and Chinese trading influences
178 have met in the South East Asian region, and Indian religious concepts
439 have penetrated deep into many of its social systems. But for more than
four hundred years the dominant commercial and political note has tended
to be sounded by Europeans. Now the balance is altering. Colonialism
may have set the modern structure of South East Asian society, but the
patterns will persist when the colonial Powers have withdrawn. To this
new society the Chinese above all have the economic key. In Indo-China,
Siam, Malaya, the Philippines, and Java, the Chinese have penetrated the
economic system and taken over crucial functions. They have shared in
much of the wholesale import trade, they have attained pre-eminence in
retailing vital imported goods to the peasant, and they act as middlemen
for the collection, storage, and processing of peasant export products. As
part of this process they often finance the peasant producer by advances
on his crop, gaining a double profit by giving part of these advances in
goods, not cash. The Chinese achievement has been remarkable. They
have been kept on the margin both of the peasant society with which they
deal, and of the European society with which at a later stage their growing
wealth would allow them to associate. Though lacking any formal political
power, which in the Orient as elsewhere is so often the passport to success,
they have built up a trading structure of extraordinary toughness, elasti-
city, and elaboration.

565 The wider political implications of this are not my concern here. But
609 it is important to note three points in connexion with the peasant theme.
186 One is the xenophobic reaction of the local urban dwellers and of peasants
578 too, which has periodically found expression against the Chinese, as traders
563 or residents in South East Asia, in the form of riots and other disturbances.
241 Another is the reaction of the Chinese, whose economic strength has given
them confidence, and who are now prepared to stand by their claim to a

1950]

THE PEASANTRY OF SOUTH EAST ASIA

509

real stake in the countries of the Nan Yang, as settled members of the local society, and not as aliens. The third point is that the Chinese community has never been one of middlemen only; there has always been a fair proportion of cultivators within it. The poor peasantry of South East Asia now includes a Chinese as well as an indigenous element. The 1947 census of Malaya shows 45,000 Chinese engaged in rice growing, and another 100,000 in market gardening and fishing, essentially peasant pursuits.

The pressure to which the South East Asian peasant has been subjected by the combination of Western and other alien influences has been severe. But we must beware lest we misinterpret it. In a recent book which gives a comparative analysis of the agrarian situation in the countries of South East Asia, appears a striking statement about Malaya—that development of mining and rubber industries has pushed the native Malay population more and more towards the east, into the areas of the former Unfederated Malay States: 'The Malays', it is said, 'considered the east as safe from Western penetration, and therefore preferred this undeveloped area to the irrigated lands on the western coast, mainly because there they could get only temporary land licences, since a complete survey of all potential tin-bearing regions had not yet been made'.¹

It is true that the eastern States are predominantly Malay in population, and that the greater part of the vast immigrant population of Malaya is densely settled on the western side of the peninsula, where the resources are richer and access easier than on the eastern side. It is also true that there has been some lack of enthusiasm among Malay peasants to colonize the new Government-developed irrigation areas, for complex reasons, including lack of capital in the past, and disinclination to move from their ancestral homes. But it is quite incorrect to put these facts together and to argue that the Malay has been pushed by alien pressure over from the west to the east of the peninsula. Apart from some seasonal movement for rice harvesting or fishing, the internal migration of Malays is inconsiderable, despite the rapid development of communications in recent years. Both the 1931 and the 1947 census show that whatever movement takes place—well under 10 per cent—is almost wholly from one State to another, either on the west coast or on the east coast, or to Singapore. Hardly any movement at all occurs from the west to the east. Moreover, the 1947 census shows that between 1931 and 1947 the Malay population of the western States increased by about one-third, at a rate slightly higher than that of the eastern States. The proportion of Malays in these western States, in terms of the total population of all ethnic groups, also increased slightly during this period, due primarily to the decline of Indians and Indonesians. In other words, though foreign economic penetration has immersed the western Malay in a flood of alien elements, it has not driven him away. On the contrary, he has preferred to stay and await events.

¹ Erich H. Jacoby, *Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia* (New York, Colombia University Press, 1949) p. 113.

[438] One reason for this is economic advantage. The coming of rubber, in particular, has given to the Malay peasant of the west coast an income considerably higher, on the whole, than that of the east coast peasant.

177
565
[66] The effects of Westernization are profound. But they do not lie in crude physical displacement of the peasant or degradation of his living conditions. They lie in the widening of the gap between his expanding range of wants and his level of productivity, and in his inability to measure and in any way control the economic forces operating in his field. Westernization has meant for the peasant an enlargement of the social horizon—more knowledge, through better communications and education, of other places, of other peoples of kindred and dissimilar interests. It has created new ambitions: for different clothing, for new uses of leisure, for a better status for his children, for a position of power in the political scene. All this has disturbed the traditional patterns of peasant society. These patterns, and the class structure of South East Asian society of which they were a part, were probably never too satisfactory to the peasant. Anxiety and evasion must have often been the response to either too rigid or too elastic a rule—and the peasant seems often to have suffered from the exactions of his superior in the social scale. But the scope of the system was known, if not its precise implications. Nowadays the scope of the system has for the most part passed beyond the peasant's grasp, and much of it has become de-personalized.

To illustrate this by giving a more concrete analysis of some of the values in the peasant's life, let me take the area of Malaya and Indonesia where Islam is the major religion of the people.

181 In his daily life the Indonesian or Malay peasant is governed largely
177 by the canons of behaviour, the ties of friendship and neighbourliness, the
565 relations of work and social intercourse of his village community. So much
602 is this so that in Java the *desa*, the village, was crystallized by the Dutch
776 into an administrative and developmental unit, and its communal structure
779 strengthened for welfare purposes. But as important as the village, and indeed often basic to its structure, are the family and larger kin organizations. From these a person gets his social status and much of his
671 land and other property, and they have the primary role in his marriage
182 and other crucial events in his progress through life.

Such domestic and local relationships also provide a framework for the peasant in his attempts to come to terms with the forces of nature and human destiny. His world of spirits is a local world. In Indonesia the ancestors do not play the predominant role which they do, for instance, in Annam. But the village, the seashore, the surrounding jungle, wells, trees, and stones are the home of many kinds of spirits, which afflict man with sickness or misfortune, or stand by him as his familiars to guard him. Basic in the religion of the Indonesian peasant is this local, essentially parochial, spirit element. All these values guide his economic and social conduct, and mean a great deal to him.

1950]

THE PEASANTRY OF SOUTH EAST ASIA

511

But the situation is complex, even in village life. The system of rules governing domestic and local relations—marriage, adoption, inheritance, rights over land, succession to local office, rules of etiquette, and behaviour to superiors—is generally known as the *adat*, the custom. The nature of this custom, and what should be its relation to a more fully developed legal system, have been elaborately studied by the Dutch in Indonesia. At times indeed they have seemed to give the *adat* almost a mystical connotation. Alongside this body of custom, which of course varies from one peasant area to another, is the *shari'a*, the religious rule of Islam. On the one hand this is a unifying force, extra-village and extra-national in character, linking even the remotest mountain farmer spiritually or emotionally with the farmer or townsman of other Muslim communities in South East Asia, and far beyond. On the other hand, the Muslim religious law blends into the field of the *adat*, laying down rules about marriage, inheritance, and other family matters. Then there are the Western rules of law and administrative procedure, laying down just how land is to be acquired, held, and transferred, giving regulations for village management, and imposing penalties for certain kinds of breach of good relations. Yet the Western system offers also inducement to use the law, to protect one's interests firmly, to take advantage of situations where the *adat* has left rights undefined. So three factors—the custom, the Muslim religious rule, and the Western system of law—interact even in the heart of peasant society.

The result is a complex set of forces in dynamic operation, with the peasant being pressed by one or other of them or championing one or other as circumstances arise. In Negri Sembilan, for instance, there has come to be what is almost now a classic case of this interaction. In former times the valuable lands were for the most part those on which 'wet rice' could be cultivated. By the matrilineal system ancestrally operative in that area, these lands were handed down in the female line, from mother to daughter, or from aunt to niece. They were also cultivated largely by women. As rubber came to be developed, however, other lands on the hill-sides, previously of much less value, came to have worth too. For the most part these had to be cleared before being planted in rubber, and this clearing was a task that only men could do properly. Hence men came to have a more direct interest in this land. When questions of inheritance began to arise, divergent views became manifest. Some argued for treating new lands like the old, and handing them down in the female line like the rice lands. Yet there was a strong case for not including these rubber lands in the category of ancestral land, but for letting them be transmitted from a father to his children and through the male line in general. This principle of male inheritance is in line with the emphasis of the Muslim law. This not only gives guidance of the patrilineal kind for distribution of the property of the deceased in cases of dispute, but in all its provisions tends to stress the status of the male against that of the female.

Within the peasant society itself the potential clash of the two systems,

181 local custom and religious rule, had been present for centuries. But there was little in the economic situation to sharpen it, and the Muslim leaders themselves were often so steeped in the local ways that they allowed as the religious law what was, in fact, the local custom. With the growth of Western processes, the perception of new economic advantages tended to change the equilibrium of the two principles. The advance of education and heightened consciousness of Islam as a world faith also tended to make the religious leaders themselves much more keenly aware of any divergence. Wealthy men who want to leave property to their sons, men with a strong religious sense, men who regard themselves as progressive, or who are in revolt against their clan leaders, therefore tend to be protagonists of the Muslim law. The conservatives, those who see in the custom a defence for women, those who see in it a symbol of an essentially Malay way of life, argue for the retention of the custom. Contact with the West, they say, is changing the structure of the peasant society enough already. The issue has also entered the modern political scene, since the search for factors to increase Malay integration tends to stress the national and extra-national character of Islam at the expense of the more local qualities of the *adat*. Here too it is growing Westernization which has sharpened the issue.

184 In a general discussion such as this, one may be allowed to refer to the peasantry of South East Asia as a body. But they are not uniform in ethnic composition, in national interests, in language, in religion, or in general culture. Moreover, within any local community, there are competing, even conflicting, interests and opinions. The peasant may be unable to face up to the general issues which affect his life so deeply, but in so far as he understands his own interests he is very alive to them and capable of exercising keen judgement in them. It is the small scale of his organization for the most part which renders him so vulnerable.

000 What is likely to be the future of South East Asia from the peasant angle? Prediction is not worth much, since so many elements in the situation are imperfectly known, but there are a few which seem to be significant.

565 The peasant has no native middle class, of the same society as himself, 185 to give a lead to his development and stability in any wider economic 656 organizations that may be set up for his benefit. To improve his economic lot, and in particular to give him a larger fraction of his product through control of marketing, co-operative societies have often been proposed and sometimes tried. Their success has been only limited, partly because the peasant has not been fully persuaded of their attractions as against what the alien middleman can offer, and partly because of the difficulty of securing adequate technical supervision and administration at a sufficiently low official level. Much is now apt to be made of the colonial or semi-colonial status of the South East Asian peasant as a drag upon his development. There is no doubt that colonialism, as a specific form of political control of under-developed territories by a metropolitan Power, is